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TOM BURKE OF "OURS" BY CHARLES LEVER.
IN THREE VOLUMES.

COLLECTION

OF

BRITISH AUTHORS.

VOL. CII.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

'TOM BURKE OF "OURS."

BY

CHARLES LEVER.

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IN THREE VOLUMES.

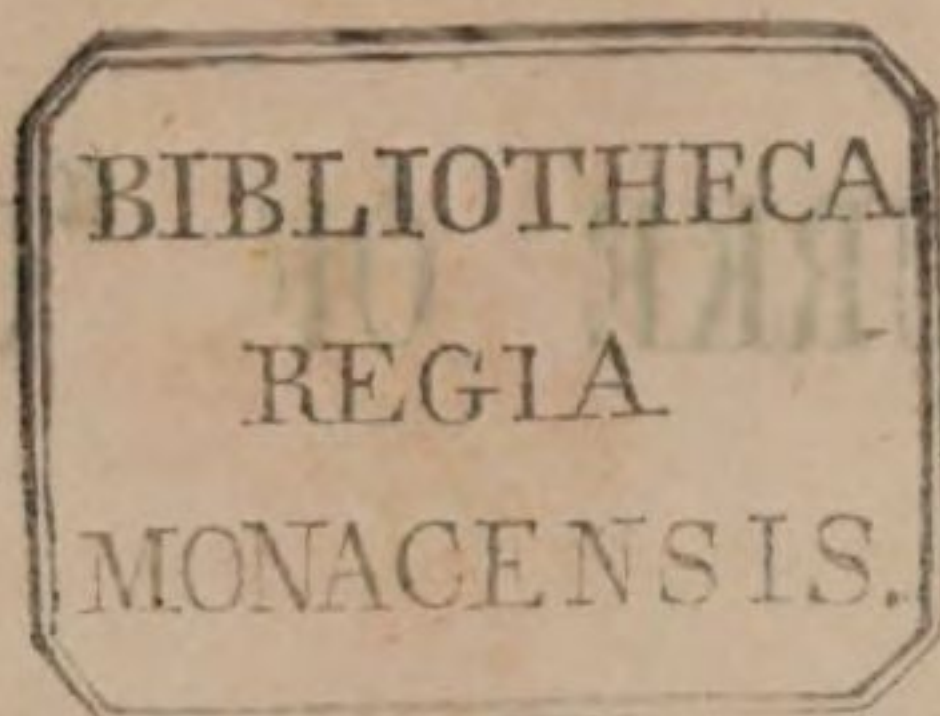
VOL. I.

LEIPZIG

BERNH. TAUCHNITZ JUN.

1848.

260.9.



**"The march — the muster — and the night
Around the bivouack —
The columns moving to the fight —
The hot and fierce attack —
The cheering charge — the storming cry —
The pealing thunder's roar,
That rings from red artillery
O'er fields of blood and gore —
These were his glory —"**

THE OUTLAW.

TO
MISS EDGEWORTH.

MADAM,

This weak attempt to depict the military life of France, during the brief but glorious period of the empire, I beg to dedicate to you. Had the scene of this, like that of my former books, been laid chiefly in Ireland, I should have felt too sensibly my own inferiority, to venture on the presumption of such a step. As it is, I never was more conscious of the demerits of my volumes than when inscribing them to you; but I cannot resist the temptation of being, even thus, associated with a name, the first in my country's literature.

Another motive I will not conceal — the ardent desire I have to assure you, that, amid the thousands you have made better, and wiser, and happier, by

your writings, you cannot count one who feels more proudly the common tie of country with you, nor more sincerely admires your goodness, and your genius, than

Your devoted and obedient servant,

CHARLES J. LEVER.

Temple-Ogue, November 25, 1843.

PREFATORY EPISTLE FROM MR. BURKE.

MY DEAR O'FLAHERTY —

It seems that I am to be the “next devoured.” Well, be it so; my story, such as it is, you shall have. One only condition would I bargain for — that you seriously disabuse your readers of the notion, that the life before them was one of either much pleasure, or profit. I might moralize a little here about neglected opportunities and mistaken opinions; but as I am about to present you with my narrative, the moral — if there be one — need not be anticipated.

I believe I have nothing else to premise, save that if my tale have little wit, it has some warning; and as Bob Lambert observed to the hangman who soaped

the rope for his execution, "even that same's a comfort." If our friend Lorrequer, then, will as kindly facilitate my *début*, I give him free liberty to "cut me down" when he likes, and am,

Yours, as ever,

TOM BURKE.

To T. O'Flaherty, Esq.
Sec. "Our Mess."

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TOM BURKE OF "OURS."

CHAPTER I.

Myself.

IT was at the close of a cold, raw day in January — no matter for the year — that the Galway mail was seen to wind its slow course through that long and dull plain that skirts the Shannon, as you approach the "sweet town of Athlone." The reeking box-coats and dripping umbrellas that hung down on every side bespoke a day of heavy rain, while the splashed and mud-stained panels of the coach bore token of cut-up roads, which the jaded and toil-worn horses amply confirmed. If the outsides, with hats pressed firmly down, and heads bent against the cutting wind, presented an aspect far from comfortable, those within, who peeped with difficulty through the dim glass, had little to charm the eye; their flannel nightcaps and red comforters were only to be seen at rare intervals, as they gazed on the dreary prospect, and then sunk back into the coach, to con over their moody thoughts, or if fortunate, perhaps to doze.

In the rumble, with the guard, rode one, whose burly figure and rosy cheeks seemed to feel no touch of the inclement wind that made his companions crouch. An oiled-silk foraging-cap, fastened beneath the chin, and a large mantle of blue cloth bespoke him a soldier, if even the assured tone of his voice, and a certain

easy carriage of his head, had not conveyed to the acute observer the same information.

Unsubdued in spirit, undepressed in mind either by the long day of pouring rain, or the melancholy outline of country on every side, his dark eye flashed as brightly from beneath the brim of his cap, and his ruddy face beamed as cheerily, as though nature had put forth her every charm of weather and scenery to greet and delight him.

Now inquiring of the guard of the various persons whose property lay on either side — the name of some poor hamlet, or some humble village, — now humming to himself some stray verse of an old campaigning song, he passed his time, diversifying these amusements by a courteous salute to a gaping country girl, as with unmeaning look she stared at the passing coach. But his principal occupation seemed to consist in retaining one wing of his wide cloak around the figure of a little boy, who lay asleep beside him, and whose head jogged heavily against his arm with every motion of the coach.

“And so that’s Athlone, yonder, you tell me,” said the captain, for such he was. “The sweet town of Athlone, ochone! Well, it might be worse. I’ve passed ten years in Africa — on the burning coast, as they call it: you never light a fire to cook your victuals, but only lay them before the sun for ten minutes, game something less, and the joint’s done; all true, by Jove! Lie still, my young friend, or you’ll heave us both over! And whereabouts does he live, guard?”

“Something like a mile and a half from here,” replied the gruff guard.

“Poor little fellow, he’s sleeping it out well. They

certainly don't take over much care of him, or they'd never have sent him on the top of a coach, in weather like this, without even a great coat to cover him. I say, Tom, my lad, wake up, you're not far from home now. Are you dreaming of the plump-pudding, and the pony, and the big spaniel — eh?"

"Whisht!" said the guard, in a low whisper. "The chap's father is dying, and they've sent for him from school to see him."

A loud blast of the horn now awoke me thoroughly from the half-dreamy slumber in which I had listened to the previous dialogue, and I sat up and looked about me. Yes, reader, my unworthy self it was, who was then indulging in as pleasant a dream of home and holidays as ever blessed even a schoolboy's vigils. Though my eyes were open, it was some minutes before I could rally myself to understand where I was, and with what object. My senses were blunted by cold, and my drenched limbs were cramped and stiffened; for the worthy captain, to whose humanity I owed the share of his cloak, had only joined the coach late in the day, and during the whole morning I had been exposed to the most pitiless downpour of rain and sleet.

"Here you are!" said the rough guard, as the coach drew up to let me down. "No need of blowing the horn here, I suppose."

This was said in allusion to the miserable appearance of the ruined cabin that figured as my father's gate lodge, where some naked children were seen standing before the door, looking with astonishment at the coach and passengers.

"Well, good-by, my little man. I hope you'll find

the governor better. Give him my respects; and, hark ye, if ever you come over to Athlone don't forget to come and see me — Captain Bubbleton — George Frederic Augustus Bubbleton, 45th regiment, or when at home, Little Bubbleton, Herts and Bungalow Hut, in the Carnatic; that 's the mark; so good-by — good-by."

I waved my hand to him in adieu, and then turned to enter the gate.

"Well, Freney," said I to a half-dressed, wild-looking figure that rushed out to lift the gate open, for the hinges had been long broken, and it was attached to the pier by some yards of strong rope, "how is my father?"

A gloomy nod and a discouraging sign with his open hand, was the only reply.

"Is there any hope?" said I faintly.

"Sorrow one of me knows. I darn't go near the house. I was sarved with notice to quit a month ago, and they tell him I'm gone. Oh, vo — vo! what's to become of us all!"

I threw the bag, which contained my humble wardrobe, on my shoulder, and, without waiting for further questioning, walked forward. Night was falling fast, and nothing short of my intimacy with the place from infancy could have enabled me to find my way. The avenue, from long neglect and disuse, was completely obliterated; the fences were broken up to burn; the young trees had mostly shared the same fate; the cattle strayed at will through the plantations, and all bespoke utter ruin and destruction.

If the scene around me was sad, it only the better suited my own heart. I was returning to a home

where I had never heard the voice of kindness or affection; where one fond word, one look of welcome had never met me. I was returning, not to receive the last blessing of a loving parent, but merely sent for, as a necessary ceremony on the occasion. And perhaps there was a mock propriety in inviting me once more to the house which I was never to revisit. My father, a widower for many years, had bestowed all his affection on my elder brother, to whom so much of his property as had escaped the general wreck was to descend. He had been sent to Eton under the guidance of a private tutor, while an obscure Dublin school was deemed good enough for me. For him every nerve was strained to supply all his boyish extravagance, and enable him to compete with the sons of men of high rank and fortune, whose names, mentioned in his letters home, were an ample recompense for all the lavish expenditure their intimacy entailed. My letters were few and brief; their unvaried theme, the delay in the last quarter's payment, or the unfurnished condition of my little trunk, which more than once exposed me to the taunts of my school-fellows.

He was a fair and delicate boy, timid in manner, and retiring in disposition; I a browned-faced varlet, who knew every one from the herd to the high-sheriff. To him the servants were directed to look up as the head of the house, while I was consigned either to total neglect, or the attentions of those who only figured as supernumeraries in our army list.

Yet, with all these sources of jealousy between us, we loved each other tenderly. George pitied "poor Tommy," as he called me, and for that very pity my

heart clung to him. He would often undertake to plead my cause for those bolder infractions his gentle nature never ventured on; and it was only when from long association with boys of superior rank, whose habits and opinions he believed to be standards for his imitation, that at length a feeling of estrangement grew up between us, and we learned to look somewhat coldly on each other.

From these brief details it will not be wondered at if I turned homeward with a heavy heart. From the hour I received the letter of my recall — which was written by my father's attorney in most concise and legal phrase — I had scarcely ceased to shed tears; for so it is, there is something in the very thought of being left an orphan, friendless and unprotected, quite distinct from the loss of affection and kindness, which overwhelms the young heart with a very flood of wretchedness; besides, a stray word or two of kindness had now and then escaped my father towards me, and I treasured these up as my richest possession. I thought of them over and over; many a lonely night, when my heart has been low and sinking, I repeated them to myself, like talismans against grief, and when I slept my dreams would dwell on them, and make my waking happy.

As I issued from a dark copse of beech trees the indistinct outline of the old house met my eye. I could trace the high-pitched roof, the tall and pointed gables, against the sky; and with a strange sense of undefinable fear beheld a solitary light that twinkled from the window of an upper room, where my father lay; the remainder of the building was in deep shadow.

I mounted the long flight of stone steps that led to

what once had been a terrace, but the ballustrades were broken many a year ago, and even the heavy granite stone had been smashed in several places. The hall-door lay wide open, and the hall itself had no other light save such as the flickering of a wood fire afforded, as its uncertain flashes fell upon the dark wainscot and the floor.

I had just recognised the grim, old-fashioned portraits that covered the walls, when my eye was attracted by a figure near the fire. I approached, and beheld an old man doubled with age, his bleared eyes were bent upon the wood embers, which he was trying to rake together with a stick. His clothes bespoke the most miserable poverty, and afforded no protection against the cold and cutting blast. He was crooning some old song to himself as I drew near, and paid no attention to me. I moved round so as to let the light fall on his face, and then perceived it was old Lanty, as he was called. Poor fellow! age and neglect had changed him sadly since I had seen him last. He had been the huntsman of the family for two generations, but having somehow displeased my father one day at the cover, he rode at him and struck him on the head with his loaded whip. The man fell senseless from his horse, and was carried home. A few days, however, enabled him to rally and be about again, but his senses had left him for ever. All recollection of the unlucky circumstance had faded from his mind, and his rambling thoughts dwelt on his old pursuits, so that he passed his days about the stables, looking after the horses, and giving directions about them. Latterly he had become too infirm for this, and never left his own cabin; but now, from some strange cause,

he had come up to "the house," and was sitting by the fire as I found him.

They who know Ireland will acknowledge the strange impulse which at the approach of death seems to excite the people to congregate about the house of mourning. The passion for deep and powerful excitement, the most remarkable feature in their complex nature, seems to revel in the details of sorrow and suffering. Not content even with the tragedy before them, they call in the aid of superstition to heighten the awfulness of the scene, and every story of ghost and banshee is conned over in tones that need not the occasion to make them thrill upon the heart. At such a time the deepest workings of their wild spirits are revealed. Their grief is low and sorrow-struck, or it is loud and passionate: now breaking into some plaintive wail over the virtues of the departed; now bursting into a frenzied appeal to the Father of Mercies, as to the justice of recalling those from earth who were its blessing; while, stranger than all, a dash of reckless merriment will break in upon the gloom, but it is like the red lightning through the storm, that as it rends the cloud, only displays the havoc and desolation around, and at its parting leaves even a blacker darkness behind it.

From my infancy I had been familiar with scenes of this kind; and my habit of stealing away unobserved from home to witness a country wake had endeared me much to the country people, who felt this no small kindness from "the master's son." Somehow the ready welcome and attention I always met with, had worked on my young heart, and I learned to feel all the interest of these scenes fully as much as those about me.

It was then with a sense of desolation that I looked upon the one solitary mourner, who now sat at the hearth — that poor old idiot man who gazed on vacancy, or muttered with parched lip some few words to himself; that he alone should be found to join his sorrows to ours, seemed to me like utter destitution, and as I leaned against the chimney I burst into tears.

“Don’t cry, alannah, don’t cry,” said the old man: “it’s the worst way at all. Get up again and ride him at it bould. Oh, vo, look at where the thief is taking now — along the stone wall there.” Here he broke out into a low wailing ditty —

“And the fox set him down and looked about,
And many were feared to follow.

‘Maybe I’m wrong,’ says he, ‘but I doubt
That you’ll be as gay to-morrow.

For loud as you cry, and high as you ride,
And little you feel my sorrow,

I’ll be free on the mountain-side,
While you’ll lie low to-morrow.’

Oh, Moddideroo, aroo, aroo.

Ay, just so — they’ll run to earth in the could church-yard — Whisht — hark there — soho, soho — that’s Badger I hear —”

I turned away with a bursting heart, and felt my way up the broad oak stair, which was left in complete darkness. As I reached the corridor, off which the bed-rooms lay, I heard voices talking together in a low tone — they came from my father’s room, the door of which lay ajar. I approached noiselessly and peeped in. By the fire, which was the only light now in the apartment, sat two persons at a small table, one of whom I at once recognised as the tall solemn-looking figure of Doctor Finnerty; the other I detected by the

sharp tones of his voice to be Mr. Anthony Basset, my father's confidential attorney.

On the table before them lay a mass of papers, parchments, leases, deeds, together with glasses and a black bottle, whose accompaniments of hot water and sugar, left no doubt as to its contents. The chimney-piece was crowded with a range of vials and medicine bottles, some of them empty, some of them half finished. From the bed in the corner of the room came the heavy sounds of snoring respiration, which either betokened deep sleep or insensibility. If I enjoyed but little favour in my father's house, I owed much of the coldness shown to me to the evil influence of the very two persons who sat before me in conclave. Of the precise source of the doctor's dislike I was not quite clear, except perhaps that I recovered from the measles when he predicted my certain death; the attorney's was, however, no mystery. About three years before he had stopped to breakfast at our house on his way to Ballinasloe fair. As his pony was led round to the stable it caught my eye. It was a most tempting bit of horseflesh, full of spirit and in top condition, for he was going to sell it. I followed him round, and appeared just as the servant was about to unsaddle him. The attorney was no favourite in the house, and I had little difficulty in persuading the man, instead of taking off the saddle, merely to shorten the stirrups to the utmost limit. The next minute I was on his back flying over the lawn at a stretching gallop. Fences abounded on all sides, and I rushed him at double ditches, stone walls, and bog-wood rails, with a mad delight that at every leap rose higher. After about three quarters of an hour thus passed, his blood, as well as my own,

being by this time thoroughly roused, I determined to try him at the wall of an old pound, which stood some few hundred yards from the front of the house. Its exposure to the window, at any other time, would have deterred me from even the thought of such an exploit, now I was quite beyond the pale of such cold calculations, besides that I was accompanied by a select party of all the labourers, with their wives and children, whose praises of my horsemanship would have made me take the lock of a canal if before me. A fine gallop of grass sward-led to the pound, and over this I went, cheered with as merry a cry as ever stirred a light heart. One glance I threw at the house as I drew near the leap; the window of the breakfast parlour was open, my father and Mr. Basset were both at it; I saw their faces red with passion, I heard their loud shout; my very spirit sickened within me — I saw no more; I felt the pony rush at the wall — the quick stroke of his feet — the rise — the plunge — and then a crash — and I was sent spinning over his head some half dozen yards, ploughing up the ground on face and hands. I was carried home with a broken head; the pony's knees were in the same condition. My father said that he ought to be shot for humanity's sake; Tony suggested the same treatment for me, on similar grounds. The upshot, however, was, I secured an enemy for life, and worse still, one whose power to injure was equalled by his inclination.

Into the company of these two worthies I now found myself thus accidentally thrown, and would gladly have retreated at once, but that some indescribable impulse to be near my father's sick bed was on me,

and so I crept stealthily in and sat down in a large chair at the foot of the bed, where unnoticed I listened to the long-drawn heavings of his chest, and in silence wept over my own desolate condition.

For a long time the absorbing nature of my own grief prevented me hearing the muttered conversation near the fire; but at length, as the night wore on, and my sorrow had found vent in tears, I began to listen to the dialogue beside me.

"He 'll have five hundred pounds under his grandfather's will in spite of us; but what's that?" said the attorney.

"I 'll take him as an apprentice for it, I know," said the doctor, with a grin that made me shudder.

"That's settled already," replied Mr. Basset. "He's to be articed to me for five years; but I think it's likely he'll go to sea before the time expires. — How heavily the old man is sleeping! Now, is that natural sleep?"

"No; that's always a bad sign: that puffing with the lips is generally among the last symptoms. Well, he'll be a loss anyhow, when he's gone. There's an eight-ounce mixture he never tasted yet — infusion of gentian, with soda. Put your lips to that."

"Devil a one o' me will ever sup the like," said the attorney, finishing his tumbler of punch as he spoke. — "Pheugh! how can you drink them things that way?"

"Sure it's the compound infusion made with orange peel and cardamom seeds. There isn't one of them didn't cost two-and-ninepence. He'll be eight weeks in bed come Tuesday next."

"Well, well! If he lived till the next assizes, it

would be telling me four hundred pounds, not to speak of the costs of two ejectments I have in hand against Mullins and his father-in-law."

"It's a wonder," said the doctor, after a pause, "that Tom didn't come by the coach. It's no matter now, at any rate; for since the eldest son's away, there's no one here to interfere with us."

"It was a masterly stroke of yours, doctor, to tell the old man the weather was too severe to bring George over from Eton. As sure as he came, he'd make up matters with Tom; and the end of it would be, I'd lose the agency, and you wouldn't have those pleasant little bills for the tenantry — eh, Fin?"

"Whisht! he's waking now — Well, Sir — well, Mr. Burke, how do you feel, now? He's off again."

"The funeral ought to be on a Sunday," said Basset in a whisper. "There'll be no getting the people to come any other day. He's saying something, I think."

"Fin," said my father, in a faint hoarse voice, — "Fin, give me a drink — It's not warm."

"Yes, Sir: I had it on the fire."

"Well, then, it's myself that's growing cold. How's the pulse now, Fin? — is the Dublin doctor come yet?"

"No, Sir; we're expecting him every minute; but sure, you know, we're doing every thing."

"Oh! I know it. Yes, to be sure, Fin; but they've many a new thing up in Dublin, there, we don't hear of. Whisht! — what's that?"

"It's Tony, Sir — Tony Basset: he's sitting up with me."

"Come over here, Tony. Tony, I'm going fast."

I feel it, and my heart is low. Could we withdraw the proceedings about Freney?"

"He's the biggest blackguard —"

"Ah! no matter now — I'm going to a place where we'll all need mercy. What was it that Canealy said he'd give for the land?"

"Two pound ten an acre — and Freney never paid thirty shillings out of it."

"It's mighty odd George didn't come over."

"Sure I told you there was two feet of snow on the ground."

"Lord be about us! what a severe season! But why isn't Tom here?" I started at the words, and was about to rush forward, when he added — "I don't want him, though."

"Of course you don't," said the attorney. "It's little comfort he ever gave you. Are you in pain there?"

"Ay, great pain over my heart. Well, well! don't be hard to him when I'm gone."

"Don't let him talk so much," said Basset in a whisper to the doctor.

"You must compose yourself, Mr. Burke," said the doctor. "Try and take a sleep. The night isn't half through yet."

The sick man obeyed without a word, and soon after the heavy respiration betokened the same lethargic slumber once more.

The voices of the speakers gradually fell into a low monotonous sound — the long-drawn breathings from the sick-bed mingled with them: the fire only sent forth an occasional gleam, as some piece of falling turf seemed to revive its wasting life, and shot up a myriad of

bright sparks; and the chirping of the cricket in the chimney corner sounded to my mournful heart like the tick of the death-watch.

As I listened, my tears fell fast; and a gulping fulness in my throat made me feel like one in suffocation. But deep sorrow, somehow, tends to sleep. The weariness of the long day and dreary night, exhaustion, the dull hum of the subdued voices, and the faint light — all combined to make me drowsy, and I fell into a heavy slumber.

I am writing now of the far-off past — of the long years ago, of my youth — since which my seared heart has had many a sore and scalding lesson; yet I cannot think of that night, fixed and graven as it lies in my memory, without a touch of boyish softness. I remember every waking thought that crossed my mind — my very dream is still before me. It was of my mother. I thought of her, as she lay on a sofa in the old drawing-room, the window open, and the blinds drawn — the gentle breeze of a June morning flapping them lazily to and fro, as I knelt beside her to repeat my little hymn, the first I ever learned; — and how at each moment my eyes would turn and my thoughts stray to that open casement, through which the odour of flowers and the sweet song of birds were pouring; and my little heart was panting for liberty, while her gentle smile and faint words bade me remember where I was. And then I was straying away through the old garden, where the very sun-light fell scantily through the thick-woven branches, loaded with perfumed blossom: the blackbirds hopped fearlessly from twig to twig, mingling their clear notes with the breezy murmur of the leaves, and the deep hum of summer bees. How happy was I

then! and why cannot such happiness be lasting? Why can we not shelter ourselves from the base contamination of worldly cares, and live on amid pleasures pure as these, with hearts as holy and desires as simple as in childhood?

Suddenly a change came over my dream, and the dark clouds began to gather from all quarters, and a low, creeping wind moaned heavily along. I thought I heard my name called. I started and awoke. For a second or two the delusion was so strong that I could not remember where I was; but as the grey light of a breaking morning fell through the half-open shutters, I beheld the two figures near the fire. They were both sound asleep, the deep-drawn breathing and nodding heads attesting the heaviness of their slumber.

I felt cold and cramped, but still afraid to stir, although a longing to approach the bed-side was still upon me. A faint sigh and some muttered words here came to my ear, and I listened. It was my father; but so indistinct the sounds, they seemed more like the ramblings of a dream. I crept noiselessly on tiptoe to the bed, and, drawing the curtain gently over, gazed within. He was lying on his back, his hands and arms outside the clothes. His beard had grown so much, and he had wasted so far, that I could scarcely have known him. His eyes were wide open, but fixed on the top of the bed; his lips moved rapidly, and, by his hands, as they were closely clasped, I thought it was in prayer. I leaned over him, and placed my hand in his. For some time he did not seem to notice it, but at last he pressed it softly, and, rubbing the fingers to and fro, he said in a low, faint voice —

“Is this your hand, my boy?”

I thought my heart had split, as, in a gush of tears, I bent down and kissed him.

"I can't see well, my dear — there's something between me and the light, and a weight is on me — here — here —"

A heavy sigh, and a shudder that shook his whole frame, followed these words.

"They told me I wasn't to see you once again," said he, as a sickly smile played over his mouth — "but I knew you'd come to sit by me. It's a lonely thing not to have one's own at such an hour as this. Don't weep, my dear — my own heart's failing me fast."

A broken, muttering sound followed, and then he said, in a loud voice —

"I never did it! It was Tony Basset. He told me, he persuaded me — ah! that was a sore day when I listened to him. Who's to tell me I'm not to be master of my own estate? Turn them adrift, ay, every man of them. I'll weed the ground of such wretches — eh, Tony? Did any one say Freney's mother was dead? They may wake her at the cross roads, if they like. Poor old Molly! I'm sorry for her, too. She nursed me and my sister that's gone; and maybe her death-bed, poor as she was, was easier than mine will be — without kith or kin, child or friend. Oh, George! — and I that doated on you with all my heart! Whose hand's this? Ah, I forgot, my darling boy — it's you. Come to me here, my child. Wasn't it for you that I toiled and scraped this many a year? wasn't it for you that I did all this, and — O God forgive me! — maybe it's my soul that I've perilled to leave you a rich man. Where's Tom? where's that fellow now?"

"Here, Sir," said I, squeezing his hand, and pressing it to my lips.

He sprang up at the words, and sat up in his bed, his eyes dilated to their widest, and his pale lips parted asunder.

"Where?" cried he, as he felt me over with his thin fingers, and drew me towards him.

"Here, father, here."

"And is this Tom?" said he, as his voice fell into a low, hollow sound, and then added — "Where's George? Answer me at once. Oh, I see it. He isn't here; he wouldn't come over to see his old father. Tony! Tony Basset, I say!" shouted the sick man in a voice that roused the sleepers, and brought them to his bedside — "open that window there. Let me look out — do it as I bid you — open it wide. Turn in all the cattle you can find on the road. Do you hear me, Tony? Drive them in from every side. Finnerty, I say, mind my words, for —" here he uttered a most awful and terrific oath — "as I linger on this side of the grave, I'll not leave him a blade of grass I can take from him."

His chest heaved with a convulsive spasm, his face became pale as death, his eyes fixed, he clutched eagerly at the bed-clothes, and then, with a horrible cry, he fell back upon the pillow, as a faint stream of red blood trickled from his nostril, and ran down his chin.

"It's all over now," whispered the doctor.

"Is he dead?" said Basset.

The other made no reply; but drawing the curtains close, he turned away; and they both moved noiselessly from the room.

CHAPTER II.

Darby — the “blast.”

IF there are dreams which by their vividness and accuracy of detail seem altogether like reality, so are there certain actual passages in our lives which, in their indistinctness while occurring, and in the faint impression they leave behind them, seem only as mere dreams. Most of our early sorrows are of this kind. The warm current of our young hearts would appear to repel the cold touch of affliction; nor can grief at this period do more than breathe an icy chill upon the surface of our affections, where all is glowing and fervid beneath. The struggle, then, between the bounding heart and the depressing care, renders our impressions of grief vague and ill-defined.

A stunning sense of some great calamity, some sorrow without hope, mingled in my waking thoughts with a childish notion of freedom. Unloved, uncared for, my early years presented but few pleasures. My boyhood had been a long struggle to win some mark of affection from one who cared not for me, and to whom still my heart had clung, as does the drowning man to the last plank of all the wreck. The tie that bound me to him was now severed, and I was without one in the wide world to look up to or to love.

I looked out from my window upon the bleak country. A heavy snow-storm had fallen during the night. A lowering sky of leaden hue stretched above the dreary landscape, across which no living thing was seen to move. Within doors all was silent. The doctor and the attorney had both taken their departure. The deep wheel-track in the snow marked the road they had followed. The servants, seated around the kitchen fire,

conversed in low and broken whispers. The only sound that broke the stillness was the ticking of the clock upon the stair. There was something that smote heavily on my heart in the monotonous ticking of that clock, that told of time passing beside him who had gone — that seemed to speak of minutes close to one whose minutes were eternity. I crept into the room where the dead body lay, and as my tears ran fast, I bent over it. I thought sometimes the expression of those cold features changed — now frowning heavily, now smiling blandly on me. I watched them till in my eager gaze the lips seemed to move, and the cheek to flush. How hard is it to believe in death! — how difficult to think that “there is a sleep that knows not waking.” I knelt down beside the bed and prayed. I prayed that now, as all of earth was nought to him who was departed, he would give me the affection he had not bestowed in life. I besought him not to chill the heart that in its lonely desolation had neither home nor friend. My throat sobbed to bursting as in my words I seemed to realize the fulness of my affliction. The door opened behind me, as with bent down head I knelt. A heavy footstep slowly moved along the floor, and the next moment the tottering figure of old Lanty stood beside me, gazing on the dead man. There was that look of vacancy in his filmy eye that showed he knew nothing of what had happened.

“Is he asleep, Master Tommy?” said the old man in a faint whisper.

My lips trembled, but I could not speak the word.

“I thought he wanted the ‘dogs’ up at Meelif; but I’m strained here about the loins, and can’t go out myself. Tell him that, when he wakes —”

"He'll never wake now, Lanty — he's dead," said I, as a rush of tears half choked my utterance.

"Dead!" said he, repeating the word two or three times. "Dead! Well, well, I wonder will Master George keep the dogs now. There seldom comes a better; and 't was himself that liked the cry o' them."

He tottered from the room as he spoke, and I could hear him muttering the same words over and over as he crept slowly down the stair.

I have said that this painful stroke of fortune was as a dream to me, and so for three days I felt it. The altered circumstances of every thing about me were inexplicable to my puzzled brain. The very kindness of the servants — so unusual to me — struck me forcibly. They felt that the time was past when any sympathy for me had been the passport to disfavour, and they pitied me.

The funeral took place on the third morning. Mr. Basset having acquainted my brother that there was no necessity for his presence, even that consolation was denied me, to meet him who alone remained of all my name and house belonging to me. How I remember every detail of that morning. The silence of the long night broken in upon by heavy footsteps ascending the stairs — strange voices, not subdued like those of all in our little household, but loud and coarse — even laughter I could hear — the noise increasing at each moment. Then the muffled sound of wheels upon the snow, and the cries of the drivers as they urged their horses forward. Then a long interval, in which nought was heard save the happy whistle of some poor postilion, who, careless of his errand, whiled away the tedious time with a lively tune. And, lastly, there came

the dull noise of feet moving step by step down the stair, the muttered words, the shuffling sound of feet as they descended, and the clank of the coffin as it struck against the wall.

The long low parlour was filled with people, few of whom I had ever seen before. They were broken up into little knots, chatting cheerfully together, while they made a hurried breakfast. The table and sideboard were covered with a profusion I had never witnessed previously. Decanters of wine passed freely from hand to hand; and although the voices fell somewhat as I appeared amidst them, I looked in vain for one touch of sorrow for the dead, or even respect for his memory.

As I took my place in the carriage beside the attorney, a kind of dreamy apathy settled down on me, and I scarcely knew what was passing. I only remember the horrible shrinking sense of dread with which I recoiled from his one attempt at consolation, and the abrupt way in which he desisted, and turned to converse with the doctor. How my heart sickened as we drew near the churchyard, and I beheld the open gate that stood wide awaiting us. The dusky figures, with their mournful black cloaks, moved slowly across the snow, like spirits of some gloomy world; while the death-bell echoed in my ears, and sent a shuddering through my frame.

* * * * *

“What is to become of the second boy?” said the clergyman in a low whisper, but which by some strange fatality struck forcibly on my ear.

“It’s not much matter,” replied Basset still lower;

"for the present, he goes home with me. Tom, I say, you come back with me to-day."

"No," said I boldly, "I'll go home again."

"Home!" repeated he with a scornful laugh —

"Home! And where may that be, youngster?"

"For shame, Basset," said the clergyman, "don't speak that way to him. My little man, you can't go home to-day. Mr. Basset will take you with him for a few days, until your late father's will is known, and his wishes respecting you."

"I'll go home, Sir," said I, but in a fainter tone, and with tears in my eyes.

"Well, well, let him do so for to-day, it may relieve his poor heart. Come, Basset, I'll take him back myself."

I clasped his hand as he spoke, and kissed it over and over.

"With all my heart," cried Basset. "I'll come over and fetch him to-morrow;" and then he added in a lower tone, "and before that you'll have found out quite enough to be heartily sick of your charge."

All the worthy vicar's efforts to rouse me from my stupor or interest me, failed. He brought me to his house, where, amid his own happy children, he deemed my heart would have yielded to the sympathy of my own age; but I pined to get back — I longed, why I knew not, to be in my own little chamber, alone with my grief. In vain he tried every consolation his kind heart and his life's experience had taught him. The very happiness I witnessed, but reminded me of my own state, and I pressed the more eagerly to return.

It was late when he drew up to the door of the house, to which already the closed window-shutters

had given a look of gloom and desertion. We knocked several times before any one came, and at length two or three heads appeared at an upper window, in half terror at the unlooked-for summons for admission.

"Good-by, my dear boy," said the vicar, as he kissed me; "don't forget what I have been telling you. It will make you bear your present sorrow better, and teach you to be happier when it is over."

"Come down to the kitchen, alannah," said the old cook, as the hall-door closed; "come down and sit with us there: sure it's no wonder your heart 'ud be low."

"Yes, Master Tommy, and Darby 'the blast' is there, and a tune and the pipes will raise you."

I suffered myself to be led along listlessly between them to the kitchen, where, around a huge fire of red turf, the servants of the house were all assembled, together with some neighbouring cottagers; Darby "the blast" occupying a prominent place in the party, his pipes laid across his knees, as he employed himself in concocting a smoking tumbler of punch.

"Your most obadient," said Darby, with a profound reverence, as I entered. "May I make so bowld as to surmise that my presence isn't unsaysonable to your feelin's; for I wouldn't be contumacious enough to adjudicate without your honour's permission?"

What I muttered in reply I know not; but the whole party were speedily reseated, every eye turned admiringly on Darby for the very neat and appropriate expression of his apology.

Young as I was, and slight as had been the consideration heretofore accorded me, there was that in the lonely desolation of my condition which awakened all their sympathies, and directed all their interests to-

wards me: and in no country are the differences of rank such slight barriers in excluding the feeling of one portion of the community from the sorrows of the others. The Irish peasant, however humble, seems to possess an intuitive tact on this subject, and to minister all the consolations in his power with a gentle delicacy that cannot be surpassed.

The silence caused by my appearing among them was unbroken for some time after I took my seat by the fire; and the only sounds were the clinking of a spoon against the glass, or the deep-drawn sigh of some compassionate soul, as she wiped a stray tear from the corner of her eye with her apron.

Darby alone manifested a little impatience at the sudden change in a party where his powers of agreeability had so lately been successful, and fidgeted on his chair, unscrewed his pipes, blew into them, screwed them on again, and then slowly nodded over to the housemaid, as he raised his glass to his lips.

"Never mind me," said I to the old cook, who, between grief and the glare of a turf fire, had her face swelled out to twice its natural size. "Never mind me, Molly, or I'll go away."

"And why would you, darlin'? Troth, no! sure there's nobody feels for you like them that was always about you. Take a cup of tay, alannah — it 'ill do you good."

"Yes, Master Tom," said the butler; "you never tasted any thing since Tuesday night."

"Do, Sir, av ye plaze?" said the pretty housemaid, as she stood before me, cup in hand.

"Arrah! what's tay?" said Darby, in a contemptuous tone of voice: "a few dirty laves, with a drop of water

on top of them, that has neither beatification nor invigoration. Here's the '*fons animi!*'" said he, patting the whiskey-bottle affectionately. "Did ye ever hear of the ancients indulging in tay! D'ye think Polyphamus and Jupither took tay!"

The cook looked down abashed and ashamed.

"Tay's good enough for women — no offence, Mrs. Cook! — but you might boil down Paykin and it'd never be potteen. *Ex quo vis ligno non fit Mercurius*' — 'You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear.' That's the meaning of it — *ligno*'s a sow."

Heaven knows I was in no mirthful mood at that moment, but I burst into a fit of laughing at this, in which, from a sense of politeness, the party all joined.

"That's it, acushla!" said the old cook, as her eyes sparkled with delight; "sure it makes my heart light to see you smilin' again. Maybe Darby would raise a tune now, and there's nothing equal to it for the spirits."

"Yes, Mister M'Keown," said the housemaid, "play 'Kiss me twice,' — Master Tom likes it."

"Devil a doubt he does," replied Darby so maliciously as to make poor Kitty blush a deep scarlet, "and no shame to him! But you see my fingers is cut, Master Tom, and I can't perform the reduplicating intonations with proper effect."

"How did that happen, Darby?" said the butler.

"Faix, easy enough. Tim Daly and myself was hunting a cat the other evening, and she was under the dhresser, and we wor poking her with a burnt stick and a raying-hook; and she somehow always escaped us, and except about an inch of her tail that we cut off, there was no getting at her; and at last I hated a

toastin'-fork and put it in, whin out she flew, teeth and claws at me. Look, there's where she stuck her thieving nails into my thumb, and took the piece clean out."

"Arrah!" said the old cook, with a most reflective gravity, "there's nothing so treacherous as a cat!" — A moral to the story which I found met general assent among the whole company.

"Nevertheless," observed Darby, with an air of ill-dissembled condescension, "if it isn't umbrageous to your honour, I'll intonate something in the way of an ode, or a canticle."

"One of your own, Darby," said the butler, interrupting.

"Well, I've no objection," replied Darby, with an affected modesty; "for you see, master, like Homer, I accompany myself on the pipes, though — glory be to God! — I'm not blind. The little thing I'll give you is imitated from the ancients — like Tibullus or Euthropeus — in the natural key."

Mister M'Keown, after this announcement, pushed his empty tumbler towards the butler with a significant glance, gave a few preparatory grunts with the pipes, followed by a long dolorous quaver, and then a still more melancholy cadence, like the expiring bray of an asthmatic jack-ass — all of which sounds seeming to be the essential preliminaries to any performance on the bag-pipes, were listened to with great attention by the company. At length, having assumed an imposing attitude, he lifted up both elbows, tilted his little finger affectedly up, dilated his cheeks, and began the following to the well-known air of "Una."

MUSIC.

Of all the arts and sciences,
 'T is Music surely takes the sway;
 It has its own appliances
 To melt the heart, or make it gay.
 To raise us,
 Or plaze us,
 There 's nothing with it can compare;
 To make us bowld,
 Or hot, or cowl,
 Just as suits the kind of air.

There 's not a woman, man, or child,
 That hasn't felt its power too:
 Don't deny it! — when you smiled
 Your eyes confess'd — that so did you.

The very winds that sigh or roar —
 The leaves that rustle, dry and sear —
 The waves that beat upon the shore —
 They all are music to your ear:

It was of use
 To Orpheüs
 He charmed the fishes in the say;
 So every thing
 Alive can sing —
 The kettle even sings for tay!

There 's not a woman, man, nor child,
 That hasn't felt its power too;
 Don't deny it! — when you smiled
 Your eyes confess'd — that so did you.

I have certainly, since this period, listened to more brilliant musical performances, but for the extent of the audience, I do not think it was possible to reap a more overwhelming harvest of applause. Indeed the old cook kept repeating stray fragments of the words to every air that crossed her memory for the rest of the evening; and as for Kitty, I intercepted more than one soft glance intended for Mister M'Keown as a reward for his minstrelsy.

Darby, to do him justice, seemed fully sensible of his triumph, and sat back in his chair, and imbibed

his liquor, like a man who had won his laurels, and needed no further efforts to maintain his eminent position in life.

As the wintry wind moaned dismally without, and the leafless trees shook and trembled with the cold blast, the party drew in closer to the cheerful turf fire, with that sense of selfish delight that seems to revel in the contrast of in-door comfort, with the bleakness and dreariness without.

"Well, Darby," said the butler; "you weren't far wrong when you took my advice to stay here for the night; listen to how it's blowing."

"That's hail," said the old cook, as the big drops came pattering down the chimney, and hissed on the red embers as they fell. "It's a cruel night, glory be to God." Here the old lady blessed herself — a ceremony which the others followed.

"For all that," said Darby, "I ought to be up at Crocknavorrigha this blessed evening. Joe Neale was to be married to-day."

"Joe! is it Joe?" said the butler.

"I wish her luck of him, whoever she is," added the cook.

"Faix, and he's a smart boy," chimed in the housemaid, with something not far from a blush as she spoke.

"He was a raal devil foor coortin', any how," said the butler.

"It's just for peace he's marrying now, then," said Darby; "the women never gave him any quietness — just so, Kitty, you needn't be looking cross that way — it's truth I'm telling you; they were always coming about him, and teasing him, and the like, and he couldn't bear it any longer."

"Arrah, howld your prate," interrupted the old

cook, whose indignation for the honour of the sex could not endure more; "he's the biggest liar from this to himself — and that same's not a small word, Darby M'Keown."

There was a pointedness in the latter part of this speech which might have led to angry consequences, had I not interposed, by asking Mr. M'Keown himself, if he ever was in love.

"Arrah, it's wishing it I am, the same love. Sure my back and sides is sore with it — my misfortunes would fill a book. Didn't I bind myself apprentice to a carpenter, for love of Molly Scraw, a niece he had, just to be near her, and be looking at her; and that's the way I shaved off the top of my thumb with the plane. By the mortal, it was near killing me; I usedn't to eat or drink; and though I was three years at the thrade, faix at the end of it, I couldn't tell you the gimlet from the handsaw."

"And you wor never married, Mister M'Keown?" said Kitty.

"Never, my darling, but often mighty near it. Many's the quare thing happened to me," said Darby, meditatively; "and sure if it wasn't my guardian angel, or something of the kind prevented it, I'd maybe have more wives this day than the Emperor of Roossia himself."

"Arrah, don't be talking," grunted out the old cook, whose passion could scarcely be restrained at the boastful tone Mister M'Keown assumed, in descanting on his successes.

"There was Biddy Finn," continued Darby, without paying any attention to the cook's interruption; "she might be Mrs. M'Keown this day, av it wasn't for a remarkable thing that happened."

"What was that?" said Kitty, with eager curiosity.

"Tell us about it, Mister M'Keown," said the butler.

"The devil a word of truth he'll tell you," grumbled the cook, as she raked the ashes with a stick.

"There's Thim here does not care for agreeable intercoorse," said Darby, assuming a grand air.

"Come, Darby, I'd like to hear the story," said I.

After a few preparatory scruples, in which modesty, offended dignity, and conscious merit struggled, Mr. M'Keown began by informing us that he had once a most ardent attachment to a certain Biddy Finn, of Ballyclough, a lady of considerable personal attractions, to whom, for a long time, he had been constant, and at last, through the intervention of Father Curtain, agreed to marry. Darby's consent to the arrangements was not altogether the result of his reverence's eloquence, nor indeed the justice of the case — nor was it quite owing to Biddy's black eyes and pretty lips — but rather to the soul-persuading powers of some fourteen tumblers of strong punch, which he swallowed at a *séance* in Biddy's father's house, one cold evening in November; after which he betook himself to the road homewards, where — but we must give his story in his own words: —

"Whether it was the prospect of happiness before me, or the potteen," quoth Darby, "but so it was, I never felt a step of the road home that night, though it was every foot of five mile. When I came to a stile, I used to give a whoop, and over it; then I'd run for a hundred yards or two, flourish my stick, cry out, 'who'll say a word against Biddy Finn?' and then over another fence, flying. Well, I reached home

at last, and wet enough I was, but I didn't care for that. I opened the door and struck a light — there was the least taste of kindling on the hearth, and I put some dry sticks into it, and some turf, and knelt down and began blowing it up.

“‘Troth,’ says I to myself, ‘if I wor married, it isn't this way I'd be — on my knees like a nagur; but when I'd come home, there 'ud be a fine fire blazin' fornint me, and a clean table out before it, and a beautiful cup of tay waiting for me — and somebody I won't mintion, sitting there, looking at me, smilin'.

“‘Don't be making a fool of yourself, Darby M'Keown,’ said a gruff voice near the chimley.

“I jumped at him, and cried out, ‘Who's that?’ but there was no answer; and at last, after going round the kitchen, I began to think that it was only my own voice I heard, so I knelt down again, and set to blowing away at the fire.

“‘And it's yerself, Biddy,’ says I, ‘that would be an ornament to a dacent cabin; and a purtier leg and foot —’

“‘Be the light that shines, you're making me sick, Darby M'Keown,’ said the voice again.

“‘The heavens be about us,’ says I, ‘what's that, and who are you at all?’ for someways I thought I knew the voice.

“‘I'm your father!’ says the voice.

“‘My father!’ says I. ‘Holy Joseph, is it truth you're telling me?’

“‘The divil a word o' lie in it,’ says the voice. ‘Take me down and give me an air o' the fire, for the night's cowl’d.’

“‘And where are you, father,’ says I, ‘av it’s plasing to ye?’”

“‘I’m on the dhresser,’ says he. ‘Don’t you see me?’”

“‘Sorra bit o’ me. Where now?’”

“‘Arrah, on the second shelf, next the rowling-pin. Don’t you see the green jug? — that’s me.’”

“‘Oh, the saints in heaven be about us!’ says I; ‘and are you a green jug?’”

“‘I am,’ says he; ‘and sure I might be worse. Tim Healey’s mother is only a cullender, and she died two years before me.’”

“‘Oh, father darlin’,’ says I, ‘I hoped you wor in glory, and you only a jug all this time!’”

“‘Never fret about it,’ says my father; ‘it’s the transmogrification of sowl, and we’ll all be right by-and-by. Take me down, I say, and put me near the fire.’”

“‘So I up and took him down, and wiped him with a clean cloth, and put him on the hearth before the blaze.’”

“‘Darby,’ says he, ‘I’m famished with the druth. Since you took to coortin’ there’s nothing ever goes into my mouth — haven’t you a taste of something in the house?’”

“‘I wasn’t long till I hated some wather, and took down the bottle of whiskey and some sugar, and made a rousing jug full, as strong as need be.’”

“‘Are you satisfied, father?’ says I.

“‘I am,’ says he, ‘you’re a dutiful child; and here’s your health, and don’t be thinking of Biddy Finn.’”

“‘With that my father began to explain how there was never any rest nor quietness for a man after he

married — more be token, if his wife was fond of talking; and that he never could take his dhrop of drink in comfort afterwards.

“‘May I never,’ says he, ‘but I’d rather be a green jug, as I am now, than alive again wid your mother. Sure it’s not here you’d be sitting to-night,’ says he, ‘discoorsing with me, av you wor married, devil a bit. Fill me,’ says my father, ‘and I’ll tell you more.’

“And sure enough I did, and we talked away till near daylight; and then the first thing I did was to take the ould mare out of the stable, and set off to Father Curtain, and towld him all about it, and how my father wouldn’t give his consent by no means.

“‘We’ll not mind the marriage,’ says his rivirence; ‘but go back and bring me your father — the jug, I mean — and we’ll try and get him out of trouble — for it’s trouble he’s in, or he wouldn’t be that way. Give me the two-pound-ten,’ says the priest: ‘you had it for the wedding, and it will be better spent getting your father out of purgatory, than sending you into it.’”

“Arrah, aren’t you ashamed of yourself?” cried the cook, with a look of ineffable scorn, as he concluded.

“Look now,” said Darby, “see this — if it isn’t thruth —”

“And what became of your father?” interrupted the butler.

“And Biddy Finn, what did she do?” said the housemaid.

Darby, however, vouchsafed no reply, but sat back in his chair with an offended look, and sipped his liquor in silence.

A fresh brew of punch under the butler's auspices speedily, however, dispelled the cloud that hovered over the conviviality of the party; and even the cook vouchsafed to assist in the preparation of some rashers, which Darby suggested "were beautiful things for the thirst at this hour of the night" — but whether in allaying or exciting it, he didn't exactly lay down. The conversation now became general; and as they seemed resolved to continue their festivities to a late hour, I took the first opportunity I could, when unobserved, to steal away and return to my own room.

No sooner alone again than all the sorrow of my lonely state came back upon me; and as I laid my head on my pillow, the full measure of my misery flowed in upon my heart, and I sobbed myself to sleep.

CHAPTER III.

The departure.

THE violent beating of the rain against the glass, and the loud crash of the storm as it shook the window frames, or snapped the sturdy branches of the old trees, awoke me. I got up, and, opening the shutters, endeavoured to look out; but the darkness was impenetrable, and I could see nothing but the gnarled and grotesque forms of the leafless trees dimly marked against the sky, as they moved to and fro like the arms of some mighty giant — masses of heavy snow melted by the rain fell at intervals from the steep roof, and struck the ground beneath with a low sumph like thunder — a greyish, leaden tinge that marked the horizon showed it was near daybreak; but there was nought of promise in this harbinger of morning. Like my own career, it opened gloomily, and in sadness:

so felt I at least; and as I sat beside the window, and strained my eyes to pierce the darkening storm, I thought that even watching the wild hurricane without was better than brooding over the sorrows within my own bosom.

How long I remained thus I know not; but already the faint streak that announces sunrise marked the dull-coloured sky, when the cheerful sounds of a voice singing in the room underneath attracted me. I listened, and in a moment recognised the piper, Darby M'Keown. He moved quickly about, and by his motions I could collect that he was making preparations for his journey.

If I could venture to pronounce, from the merry tones of his voice, and the light elastic step with which he trod the floor, I certainly would not suppose that the dreary weather had any terror for him. He spoke so loud that I could catch a great deal of the dialogue he maintained with himself, and some odd verses of the song with which from time to time he garnished his reflections.

"Marry, indeed! — catch me at it — nabocklish — with the country side before me, and the hoith of good eating and drinking for a blast of the chauntre. Well, well, women's quare craytures anyway.

Ho, ho! Mister Barney,
No more of your blarney,
I'd have you not make so free;
You may go where you plaze,
And make love at your ease,
But the devil may have you for me.

Very well, Ma'am — Mister M'Keown is your most obadient — never say it twice, honey — and isn't there as good fish — eh, whoop!

Oh! my heart is unazy,
 My brain is run crazy,
 Sure it 's often I wish I was dead;
 'T is your smile now so sweet,
 Now your ancles and feet,
 That 's walked into my heart, Molly Spread.
 Tol derol, de rol, oh!

Whew! that 's rain, anyhow. I wouldn't mind it, bad as it is, if I hadn't the side of a mountain before me; but sure it comes to the same in the ind. Catty Delany is a good warrant for a pleasant evening, and please God I'll be playing Baltiorum beside the fire there before this time to-night.

She 'd a pig and boneens,
 And a bed and a dresser,
 And a nate little room
 For the father confessor,
 With a cupboard and curtains, and something, I 'm towld,
 That his rev'rance liked, when the weather was cowld.
 And its hurroo, hurroo! Biddy O'Rafferty.

After all, faix, the priest bates us out. There 's eight o'clock now, and I 'm not off — devil a one 's stirring in the house either. Well, I believe I may take my leave of it — sorrow many tunes of the pipes it 's likely to hear, with Tony Basset over it; and my heart 's low when I think of that child there. Poor Tom! and it was you liked fun when you could have it."

I wanted but the compassionate tone in which these few words were spoken to decide me in a resolution that I had been for some time pondering over. I knew that ere many hours Basset would come in search of me — I felt that, once in his power, I had nothing to expect but the long-promised payment of his old debt of hatred to me. In a few seconds I ran over with myself the prospect of misery before me,

and determined at once, at every hazard, to make my escape. Darby seemed to afford me the best possible opportunity for this purpose, and I dressed myself, therefore, in the greatest haste, and, throwing whatever I could find of my wardrobe into my carpet-bag, I pocketed my little purse, with all my worldly wealth — some twelve or thirteen shillings — and noiselessly slipped down stairs to the room beneath. I reached the door at the very moment Darby opened it to issue forth. He started back with fear, and crossed himself twice.

“Don’t be afraid, Darby,” said I, uneasy lest he should make any noise that would alarm the others. “I want to know which road you are travelling this morning.”

“The saints be about us, but you frightened me, Master Tommy — though, intermediately, I may observe, I’m no ways timorous. I’m going within two miles of Athlone.”

“That’s exactly where I want to go, Darby — will you take me with you?” — for at the instant Captain Bubbleton’s address flashed on my mind, and I resolved to seek him out and ask his advice in my difficulties.

“I see it all,” replied Darby, as he placed the tip of his finger on his nose. “I conceive your embarrassments — you’re afraid of Basset, and small blame to you; but don’t do it, Master Tommy, don’t do it, alannah: that’s the hardest life at all.”

“What?” said I, in amazement.

“To list: sure I know what you’re after; faix, it would sarve you better to larn the pipes.”

I hastened to assure Darby of his error, and in a

few words informed him of what I had overheard of Basset's intentions respecting me.

"Make you an attorney!" said Darby, interrupting me abruptly — "an attorney! — there's nothing so mean as an attorney: the pōlice is gentlemen compared to them — they fight it out fair like men; but the other chaps sit in a house planning and contriving mischief all day long, inventing every kind of wickedness, and then getting people to do it. See, now, I believe in my conscience the devil was the first attorney, and it was just to sarve his own ends that he bred a ruction between Adam and Eve — but whisht! there's somebody stirring. Are you for the road?"

"Yes, Darby; my mind's made up."

Indeed his own eloquent eulogium on legal pursuits assisted my resolution, and filled my heart with renewed disgust at the thought of such a guardian as Tony Basset.

We walked stealthily along the gloomy passages, traversed the old hall, and noiselessly withdrew the heavy bolts and the great chain that fastened the door. The rain was sweeping along the ground in torrents, and the wind dashed it against the window-panes in fitful gusts: it needed all our strength to close the door after us against the storm, and it was only after several trials that we succeeded in doing so. The hollow sound of the oak door smote upon my heart as it closed behind me: in an instant the sense of banishment — of utter destitution, was present to my mind. I turned my eyes to gaze upon the old house — to take my last farewell of it for ever. Gloomy as my prospect was, my sorrow was less for the sad future than for the misery of the moment.

"No, Master Tom, no, you must go back," said Darby, who watched with a tender interest the sickly paleness of my cheek, and the tottering uncertainty of my walk.

"No, Darby," said I, with an effort at firmness. "I'll not look round any more;" and bending my head against the storm, I stepped out boldly beside my companion. We walked on without speaking, and soon left the neglected avenue and ruined gate-lodge behind us, as we reached the high road that led to Athlone.

Darby, who only waited to let my first burst of sorrow find its natural vent, no sooner perceived from my step, and the renewed colour of my cheek, that I had rallied my courage once more, than he opened all his stores of agreeability, which to my inexperience in such matters were by no means inconsiderable. Abandoning at once all high-flown phraseology, — which Mister M'Keown, I afterwards remarked, only retained as a kind of gala suit for great occasions — he spoke freely and naturally; lightening the way with many a story — now grave, now gay — he seemed to care little for the inclemency of the weather, and looked pleasantly forward to a happy evening as an ample reward for the present hardship.

"And the captain, Master Tom, you say he's an agreeable man," said Darby, alluding to my late companion on the coach, whose merits I was never tired of recapitulating.

"Oh, delightful! he has travelled everywhere, and seems to know everybody and every thing: he's very rich, too — I forget how many horses he has in England, and elephants without number in India."

"Faix! you were in luck to fall in with him," observed Barney.

"Yes, that I was! I'm sure he'll do something for me; and for you too, Darby, when he knows you have been so kind to me."

"Me! What did I do, darling? and what could I do, a poor piper like me? Wouldn't it be honour enough for me, if a gentleman's son would travel the road with me? Darby M'Keown's a proud man this day to have you beside him."

A ruined cabin in the road, whose blackened walls and charred timbers denoted its fate, here attracted my companion's attention: he stopped for a second or two to look on it, and then kneeling down, he muttered a short prayer for the eternal rest of some one departed, and taking up a stone, he threw it on a heap of similar ones which lay near the door side.

"What happened there, Darby?" said I, as he resumed his way.

"They wor out in the thrubles," was his only reply, as he cast a glance behind, to perceive if any one had remarked him.

Though he made no further allusion to the fate of those who once inhabited the cabin, he spoke freely of his own share in the eventful year of Ninety-eight; justifying, as it then seemed to me, every step of the patriotic party, and explaining the causes of their unsuccess so naturally and so clearly, that I could not help following with interest every detail of his narrative, and joining in his regrets for the unexpected and adverse strokes fortune dealt upon them. As he warmed with his subject, he spoke of France with an enthusiasm that I soon found contagious; he told me of the

glorious career of the French armies in Italy and Austria, and of that wonderful man of whom I then heard for the first time, as spreading a halo of victory over his nation; contrasting, as he went on, the rewards which awaited heroism and bravery in that service, with the purchased promotion in ours, artfully illustrating his position by a reference to myself, and what my fortunes would have been, if born under that happier sky. "No elder brother there," said he, "to live in affluence, while the younger ones are turned out to wander on the wide world, houseless and pennyless; and all these things we might have won, had we been but true to ourselves!"

I drank in all he said with avidity; the bearing of his arguments on my own fortunes gave them an interest and an apparent truth my young mind eagerly devoured; and when he ceased to speak, I pondered over all he told me in a spirit that left its impress on my whole future life.

It was a new notion to me to connect my own fortunes with any thing in the political condition of the country, and while it gave my young heart a kind of martyred courage, it set my brain a-thinking on a class of subjects which never before possessed any interest for me; there was a flattery, too, in the thought that I owed my straitened circumstances less to any demerits of my own, than to political disabilities. The time was well chosen by my companion to instil his doctrines into my heart — I was young, ardent, enthusiastic — my own wrongs had taught me to hate injustice and oppression — my condition had made me feel, and feel bitterly, the humiliation of dependance; and if I listened with eager curiosity to every story

and every incident of the by-gone rebellion, it was because the contest was represented to me as one between tyranny on one side and struggling liberty on the other. I heard the names of those who sided with the insurgent party extolled as the great and good men of their country — their ancient families and hereditary claims furnishing a contrast to many of the opposite party, whose recent settlement in the island and new-born aristocracy were held up in scoff and derision. In a word, I learned to believe that the one side was characterised by cruelty, oppression, and injustice — the other conspicuous only for endurance, courage, patriotism, and truth. What a picture was this to a mind like mine! — and at a moment, too, when I seemed to realize in my own desolation, an example of the very sufferings I heard of.

If the portrait M'Keown drew of Ireland was sad and gloomy, he painted France in colours the brightest and most seductive. Dwelling less on the political advantages which the revolution had won for the popular party, he directed my entire attention to the brilliant career of glory the French army had followed — the triumphant success of the Italian campaign — the war in Germany, and the splendour of Paris, which he represented as a very paradise on earth; but, above all, he dwelt on the character and achievements of the first consul, recounting many anecdotes of his early life, from the period when he was a schoolboy at Brienne to the hour when he dictated the conditions of peace to the oldest monarchies of Europe, and proclaimed war with the voice of one who came as an avenger.

I drank in every word he spoke with avidity — the

very enthusiasm of his manner was contagious — I felt my heart bound with rapturous delight at some hardy deed of soldierlike daring, and conceived a kind of wild idolatry for the man who seemed to have infused his own glorious temperament into the mighty thousands around him, and converted a whole nation into heroes.

Darby's information on all these matters — which seemed to me something miraculous — had been obtained at different periods from French emissaries who were scattered through Ireland, many of them old soldiers, who had served in the campaigns of Egypt and Italy.

"But sure, if you'd come with me, Master Tom, I could bring you where you'll see them yourself, and you could talk to them of the battles and skirmishes, for I suppose you spake French."

"Very little, Darby. How sorry I am now that I don't know it well."

"No matter, they'll soon teach you, and many a thing beside. There's a captain I know of not far from where we are this minute could learn you the small sword — in style he could. I wish you saw him in his green uniform with white facings, and three elegant crosses upon it that General Buonaparte gave him with his own hands; he had them on one Sunday, and I never see'd any thing equal to it."

"And are there many French officers hereabouts?"

"Not now; no, they're almost all gone. After the rising they went back to France, except a few. Well, there 'ill be call for them again, please God."

"Will there be another rebellion, then, Darby?"

As I put this question fearlessly, and in a voice

loud enough to be heard at some distance, a horseman, wrapped up in a loose cloth cloak, was passing; he suddenly pulled up short, and turning his horse round, stood exactly opposite to the piper. Darby saluted the stranger respectfully, and seemed desirous to pass on, but the other, turning round in his saddle, fixed a stern look on him, and he cried out —

“What! at the old trade, M’Keown. — Is there no curing you, eh?”

“Just so, major,” said Darby, assuming a tone of voice he had not made use of the entire morning; “I’m conveying a little instrumental recreation.”

“None of your d—d gibberish with me Who’s that with you?”

“He’s a son of a neighbour of mine, your honour,” said Darby, with an imploring look at me not to betray him. “His father’s a schoolmaster — a philomath, as one might say.”

I was about to contradict this statement bluntly, when the stranger called out to me —

“Mark me, young Sir, you’re not in the best of company this morning, and I recommend you to part with your friend as soon as maybe. And you,” said he, turning to Darby, “let me see you in Athlone at ten o’clock to-morrow. D’ye hear me?”

The piper grew pale as death as he heard this command, to which he only responded by touching his hat in silence; while the horseman, drawing his cloak around, dashed his spurs into his beast’s flanks, and was soon out of sight. Darby stood for a moment or two, looking down the road where the stranger had disappeared; a livid hue coloured his cheek, and a tremulous quivering of his under lip gave him the appearance of one in ague.

"I'll be even with ye, yet," muttered he between his clenched teeth; "and when the hour comes —"

Here he repeated some words in Irish, with a vehemence of manner that actually made my blood tingle; then suddenly recovering himself, he assumed a kind of sickly smile. "That's a hard man, the major."

"I'm thinking," said Darby, after a pause of some minutes — "I'm thinking it's better for you not to go into Athlone with me; for if Basset wishes to track you out, that 'ill be the first place he'll try; besides, now that the major has seen you, he'll never forget you."

Having pledged myself to adopt any course my companion recommended, he resumed —

"Ay, that's the best way. I'll lave you at Ned Malone's, in the Glen; and when I've done with the major in the morning, I'll look after your friend the captain, and tell him where you are."

I readily assented to this arrangement, and only asked what distance it might yet be to Ned Malone's, for already I began to feel fatigue.

"A good ten miles," said Darby, "no less; but we'll stop here above, and get something to eat, and then we'll take a rest for an hour or two, and you'll think nothing of the road after."

I stepped out with increased energy at the cheering prospect; and although the violence of the weather was nothing abated, I consoled myself with the thought of the rest and refreshment before me, and resolved not to bestow a thought upon the present. Darby, on the other hand, seemed more depressed than before, and betrayed in many ways a state of doubt and uncertainty as to his movements — sometimes pushing on rapidly

for half a mile or so, then relapsing into a slow and plodding pace, often looking back too, and more than once coming to a perfect stand-still, talking the whole time to himself in a low muttering voice.

In this way we proceeded for above two miles, when at last I descried through the beating rain the dusky gable of a small cabin in the distance, and eagerly asked if that were to be our halting-place.

"Yes," said Darby, "that's Peg's cabin; and though it's not very remarkable in the way of cookery or the like, it's the only house within seven miles of us."

As we came nearer, the aspect of the building became even less enticing. It was a low mud hovel, with a miserable roof of sods or scraws, as they are technically called; a wretched attempt at a chimney occupying the gable, and the front to the road containing a small square aperture, with a single pane of glass as a window, and a wicker contrivance in the shape of a door, which, notwithstanding the severity of the day, lay wide open to permit the exit of the smoke, which rolled more freely through this than through the chimney. A filthy pool of stagnant, green-covered water stood before the door, through which a little causeway of earth led. Upon this a thin, lank-sided sow was standing to be rained on, her long, pointed snout turned meditatively towards the luscious mud beside her. Displacing this important member of the family with an unceremonious kick, Darby stooped to enter the low door way, uttering as he did so the customary "God save all here." As I followed him in, I did not catch the usual response to the greeting, and from the thick smoke which filled the cabin, could see nothing whatever around me.

“Well, Peg,” said Darby, “how is it with you the day?”

A low grunting noise issued from the foot of a little mud wall beside the fire-place. I turned and beheld the figure of a woman of some seventy years of age seated beside the turf embers; her dark eyes, bleared with smoke and dimmed with age, were still sharp and piercing, and her nose, thin and aquiline, indicated a class of features by no means common among the people. Her dress was the blue frize coat of a labouring man, over the woollen gown usually worn by women. Her feet and legs were bare, and her head was covered with an old straw bonnet, whose faded ribbon and tarnished finery betokened its having once belonged to some richer owner. There was no vestige of any furniture — neither table, nor chair, nor dresser, nor even a bed, unless some straw laid against the wall in one corner could be thus called; a pot suspended over the wet and sodden turf by a piece of hay rope, and an earthen pipkin with water stood beside her. The floor of the hovel, lower in many places than the road without, was cut up into sloppy mud by the tread of the sow, who ranged at will through the premises. In a word, more dire and wretched poverty it was impossible to conceive.

Darby's first movement was, to take off the lid and peer into the pot, when the bubbling sound of the boiling potatoes assured him that we should have at least something to eat; his next was, to turn a little basket upside down for a seat, to which he motioned me with his hand; then, approaching the old woman, he placed his hand to his mouth and shouted in her ear —

"What's the major after this morning, Peg?"

She shook her head gloomily a couple of times, but gave no answer.

"I'm thinking there's bad work going on at the town there," cried he, in the same loud tone as before.

Peg muttered something in Irish, but far too low to be audible.

"Is she mad, poor thing?" said I, in a whisper.

The words were not well uttered, when she darted on me her black and piercing eyes, with a look so steadfast as to make me quail beneath them.

"Who's that there?" said the hag, in a croaking harsh voice.

"He's a young boy from beyond Loughrea."

"No," shouted she, in a tone of passionate energy, "don't tell me a lie. I'd know his brows among a thousand: he's a son of Mat Burke's, of Cronmore."

"Begorra, she is a witch — devil a doubt of it," muttered Darby between his teeth. "You're right, Peg," continued he, after a moment. "His father's dead, and the poor child's left nothing in the world."

"And so ould Mat's dead," interrupted she. "When did he die?"

"On Tuesday morning, before day."

"I was dhraming of him that morning, and I thought he kem up here to the cabin door on his knees and said, 'Peggy, Peggy M'Casky, I'm come to ax your pardon for all I done to you,' and I sat up in my bed, and cried out, 'Who's that?' and he said, "'Tis me — 'tis Mister Burke — I'm come to give you back your lease.' 'I'll tell you what you'll give me back,' says I, 'give me the man whose heart you bruck

with bad treatment — give me the two fine boys you transported for life — give me back twenty years of my own, that I spent in sorrow and misery.”

“Peg, acushla! don’t speak of it any more. The poor child here, that’s fasting from daybreak, he isn’t to blame for what his father did. I think the praties is done by this time.”

So saying, he lifted the pot from the fire, and carried it to the door to strain off the water. The action seemed to rouse the old woman, who rose rapidly to her legs, and, hastening to the door, snatched the pot from his hand and pushed him to one side.

“’Tis two days since I tasted bit or sup. — ’Tis God himself knows when and where I may have it again; but if I never broke my fast I’ll not do it with the son of him that left me a lone woman this day, that brought the man that loved me to the grave, and my children to shame for ever.”

As she spoke, she dashed the pot into the road with such force as to break it into fifty pieces; and then, sitting down on the outside of the cabin, she wrung her hands and moaned piteously, in the very excess of her sorrow.

“Let us be going,” said Darby, in a whisper. “There’s no spaking to her when she’s one of them fits on her.”

We moved silently from the hovel, and gained the road. My heart was full to bursting — shame and abasement overwhelmed me, and I dared not look up.

“Good-by, Peg: I hope we’ll be better friends when we meet again,” said Darby, as he passed out.

She made no reply, but entered the cabin, from

which, in an instant after, she emerged, carrying a lighted sod of turf in a rude wooden tongs.

"Come along quick," said Darby, with a look of terror, "she's going to curse you."

I turned round, transfixed and motionless. If my life depended on it, I could not have stirred a limb. The old woman by this time had knelt down on the road, and was muttering rapidly to herself —

"Come along, I say," said Darby, pulling me by the arm.

"And now," cried the hag aloud, "may bad luck be your shadow wherever you walk, with sorrow behind and bad hopes before you — may you never taste happiness nor ease, and, like this turf, may your heart be always burning here, and —"

I heard no more, for Darby, tearing me away by main force, dragged me along the road, just as the hissing turf embers had fallen at my feet, where the hag had thrown them.

CHAPTER IV.

My wanderings.

I CANNOT deny it, the horrible imprecation I had heard uttered against me, seemed to fill up the cup of my misery. An outcast, without home, without a friend, this alone was wanting to overwhelm me with very wretchedness; and as I covered my face with both hands, I thought my heart would break.

"Come, come, Master Tom," said Darby, "don't be afeard, it 'ill never do you harm, all she said. I made the sign of the cross on the road between you and her with the end of my stick, and you're safe enough this time. Faix, she's a quare divil when she's

roused — to destroy an illigint pot of praties that way; but sure she had hard provocation — well, well, you warn't to blame any how: Tony Basset will have a sore reckoning some day for all this."

The mention of that name recalled me in a moment to the consideration of my own danger if he were to succeed in overtaking me, and I eagerly communicated my fear to Darby.

"That's thrue," said he; "we must leave the high road, for Basset will be up at the house by this, and will lose no time in following you out. If you had a bit of something to eat."

"As to that Darby," said I, with a sickly effort to smile, "Peg's curse took away my appetite, full as well as her potatoes would have done."

"'Tis a bad way to breakfast after all," said Darby. "Do you ever take a shaugh of the pipe, Master Tom?"

"No," said I laughing, "I never learned to smoke yet."

"Well," replied he, a little piqued by the tone of my answer, "'t is worse you might be doin' than that same. Tobacco's a fine thing for the heart! Many's the time when I'm alone, if I hadn't the pipe, I'd be low and sorrowful — thinking over the hard times, and the like; but when I've filled my dudeen, and do be watching the smoke curling up, I begin dhraming about sitting around the fire with pleasant companions, chatting away, and discoorsing, and telling stories; and then I invint the stories to myself, about quare devils of pipers travelling over the country, making love here and there, and playing dhroll tunes out of their own heads; and then I make the tunes to them; and

after that, maybe, I make words, and sometimes lay down the pipe and begin singing to myself; and often I take up the bagpipes and play away with all my might, 'till I think I see the darlingest little fairies ever you seen dancing before me, setting to one another, and turning round, and capering away — down the middle and up again: small chaps with three-cornered hats, and wigs, and little red coats, all slashed with goold; and beautiful little craytures houlding their petticoats this way, to show a nate leg and foot; and I do be calling out to them — ‘hands round’ — ‘that’s your sowl’ — ‘look at the green fellow — ’tis himself can do it’ — ‘rise the jig, hoo!’ and faix ’tis sorry enough I’m when they go, and lave me all alone by myself.”

“And how does all that come into your head, Darby?”

“Troth, ’tis hard to tell,” said Darby, with a sigh; “but my notion is, that the poor man that has neither fine houses, nor fine clothes, nor horses, nor sarvants to amuse him, that Providence is kind to him in another way, and fills his mind with all manner of dhroll thoughts, and quare stories, and bits of songs, and the like; and lets him into many a sacret about fairies, and the good people, that the rich has no time for: and sure you must have often remarked it, that the quality has never a bit of fun in them at all, but does be always coming to us for something to make them laugh. Did you never lave the parlour, when the company was sitting with lashings of wine and fruit, and every convaniency, and go down stairs to the kitchen, where maybe there was nothing but a salt herrin’ and a jug of punch, and if you did, where was

the most fun I wondher? Arrah, when they bid me play a tune for them, and I look at their sorrowful, pale faces, and their dim eyes, and the stiff way they sit upon their chairs, I never put heart in it; but when I rise, 'Dirty James,' or 'The Little Bould Fox,' or 'Kiss my Lady,' for the boys and girls, sure 't is my whole sowl does be in the bag, and I squeeze the notes out of it with all my might."

In this way did Darby converse until we reached a cross road, when, coming to a halt, he pointed with his finger to the distance and said —

"Athlone is down beyant that low mountain. Now Ned Malone's is only six short miles from this. You keep this by-road till you reach the smith's forge, then turn off to the left, across the fields, till you come to an ould ruin, lave that to your right hand, and follow the boreen straight, 't will bring you to Ned's doore."

"But I don't know him," said I.

"What signifies that — sure 'tis no need you have — tell him you 'll stop there till Darby the Blast comes for you; and see now, here's all you have to do — put your right thumb in the palm of your left hand this way, and then kiss the other thumb, then you have it; but mind don't do that till you're alone with him — 't is a token between ourselves."

"I wish you were coming with me, Darby — I'd rather not leave you!"

"'T is myself mislikes it too," said Darby with a sigh; "but I darn't miss going to Athlone, the major would soon ferret me out — and it's worse it would be for me."

"And what am I to do if Mr. Basset comes after me?"

"If he hasn't a throop of horse at his back, you may laugh at him in Ned Malone's; and now good-by, acushla, and don't let your heart be low — you'll be a man soon you know."

The words of encouragement could not have been more happily chosen to raise my drooping spirits: the sense of opening manhood was already stirring within me, and waited but for some direct occasion to elicit it in full vigour.

I shook Darby's hand with a firm grasp, and, assuming the easiest smile I could accomplish, set out on the path before me, with all the alacrity in my power.

The first thought that shot across my mind when I parted with my companion, was the utter loneliness of my condition; the next, and it followed immediately on the other, was the bold consciousness of personal freedom. I enjoyed at the moment the untrammelled liberty to wander, without let or control; all memory of Tony Basset was forgotten, and I only remembered the restraint of school and the tyranny of my master. My plan — and already I had formed a plan — was, to become a farmer's servant — to work as a daily labourer. Ned Malone would probably accept of me, young as I was, in this capacity; and I had no other ambition than such as secured my independence.

As I travelled along, I wove within my mind a whole web of imaginary circumstances, of days of peaceful toil — of nights of happy and contented rest — of friendship formed with those of my own age and condition — of the long summer evenings, when I should ramble alone to commune with myself on my humble but happy lot — on the red hearth in winter, around which the merry faces of the cottagers were beaming,

as some pleasant tale was told; and as I asked myself, would I exchange a life like this, for all the advantages of fortune my brother's position afforded him, my heart replied — no. Even then the words of the piper had worked upon me, and already had I connected the possession of wealth with oppression and tyranny, and the lowly fortunes of the poor man, as alone securing high-souled liberty of thought, and freedom of speech and action.

I trudged along through the storm, turning from time to time to see that I was not pursued; for as the day waned my fear of being overtaken increased, and in every moaning of the wind, and every rustle of the branches, I thought I heard Tony Basset summoning me to stop and surrender myself his prisoner. This dread gradually gave way, as the loneliness of the road was unbroken by a single traveller — the wild half-tilled fields presented no living object far or near — the thick rain swooped along the swampy earth, and, in its misty darkness, shut out all distant prospect, and a sadder picture eye never rested on.

At length I reached the ruined church Darby spoke of, and following the track he indicated, soon came out upon the breen, where for the first time some little shelter existed.

It was only at night-fall, when fatigue and hunger had nearly obtained the victory over me, that I saw at some short distance in front, the long roof of a well-thatched cabin; as I came nearer, I could perceive that it contained several windows, and that the door was sheltered by a small porch — marks of comfort by no means common among the neighbouring farmers — lights moved here and there through the cabin, and

the voices of people driving in the cows, and the barking of dogs, were welcome sounds to my ear. A half-clad urchin, of some seven years old, armed with a huge bramble, was driving a flock of turkeys before him as I approached; but instead of replying to my question, "If this were Ned Malone's?" the little fellow threw down his weapon, and ran for his life. Before I could recover from my surprise at his strange conduct, the door opened, and a large, powerful-looking man, in a long, blue coat, appeared. He carried a musket in his hand, which, as soon as he perceived the figure before him, he laid down within the porch, calling out to some one inside —

"Go back, Maurice — it's nothing. Well, Sir," continued he, addressing me, "do you want anybody hereabouts?"

"Is this Ned Malone's, may I ask?" said I.

"It is," answered he, "and I am Ned Malone, at your service, and what then?"

There was something in the cold, forbidding tone in which he spoke, as well as in the hard severity of his look, that froze all my resolution to ask a favour, and I would gladly have sought elsewhere for shelter for the night, had I known where to look.

The delay this indecision on my part created caused him to repeat his question, while he fixed his eyes on me with a dark and piercing expression.

"Darby the Blast told me," said I, with a great effort to seem at ease, "that you would give me shelter to-night. To-morrow morning he's to come here for me."

"And who are you," said he, harshly, "that I'm to take into my house? In these troublesome times, a man may ask the name of his lodger?"

"My name is Burke. My father was Burke of Cremore, but he's dead now."

"'Tis you that Basset is after all day — is it?"

"I can't tell, but I fear it may be."

"Well, some one told him that you took the Dublin road, and another sent him up here, and the boys here sent him to Durragh. And what are you after, young gentleman? do you dislike Tony Basset? Is that it?"

"Yes," said I, "I'm resolved never to go home and live with him. He made my father hate me, and through him I have been left a beggar."

"There's more than you has a score to settle with Tony. Come into the house and get your clothes dried — But stop, I have a bit of a caution to give you. If you see any thing or any body while you're under my roof that you didn't expect —"

"Trust me there," interrupted I, eagerly, and making the sign the piper had taught me.

"What!" cried Malone, in astonishment, "are you one of us? Is a son of Matt Burke's going to redress the wrongs his father and grandfather before him inflicted? Give me your hand, my brave boy; there's nothing in this house isn't your own from this minit."

I grasped his strong hand in mine, and with a proud and swelling heart followed him into the cabin.

A whisper crept round the various persons that sat and stood about the kitchen fire as I appeared among them; and the next moment one after another pressed anxiously forward to shake hands with me.

"Help him off with his wet clothes, Maurice," said Malone, to a young man of some twenty years; and in a few seconds my wet garments were hung on chairs

before the blaze, and I myself, accommodated with a frize coat that would make a waistcoat for an elephant, sat basking before the cheerful turf fire. The savoury steam of a great mess of meat and potatoes induced me to peep into the large pot over the fire — a hearty burst of laughing from the whole party acknowledged their detection of my ravenous hunger, and the supper was smoking on the board in a few minutes after. Unhappily, a good number of years have rolled over my head since that night; but I still hesitate to decide whether to my appetite or to Mrs. Malone's cookery I should attribute it, but certainly my performance on that occasion called forth unqualified admiration.

I observed, during the supper, that one of the girls carried a plateful of the savoury dish into a small room at the end of the kitchen, carefully closing the door after her as she entered, and when she came out exchanging with Malone a few hurried words, to which the attention of the others was evidently directed. The caution I had already received, and my own sense of propriety, prevented my paying any attention to this, and I conversed with those about me, freely narrating the whole circumstances of my departure from home, my fear of Basset, and my firm resolve, come what might, never to become an inmate of his house and family. Not all the interest they took in my fortunes, nor even their warm praises of what they called my courage and manliness, could ward off the tendency to sleep; and my eyes actually closed as I lay down in my bed, and, notwithstanding the noise of voices and the sounds of laughter so near me, sank into the heaviest slumber.

CHAPTER V.

The cabin.

BEFORE day broke, the stir and bustle of the household awoke me; and had it not been for the half-open door which permitted a view of the proceedings in the kitchen, I should have been sadly puzzled to remember where I was. The cheerful turf fire, the happy faces, and the pleasant voices, all reminded me of the preceding night, and I lay pondering over my fortunes, and revolving within myself many a plan for the future.

In all the day-dreams of ambition in which youth indulges, there is this advantage over the projects of maturer years — the past never mingles with the future. In after life our by-gone existence is ever tinging the time to come: the expectations friends have formed of us, the promises we have made to our own hearts, the hopes we have created — seem to pledge us to something, which, if unattained, sounds like failure; but in earlier years, the budding consciousness of our ability to reach the goal does but stimulate us, and never chills our efforts by the dread of disappointment. We have, as it were, only bound ourselves in recognizances with our own hearts — the world has not gone bail for us, and our falling short involves not the ruin of others, nor the loss of that self respect which is but the reflex of the opinion of society. I felt this strongly; and the more I ruminated on it, the more resolutely bent was I to adopt some bold career — some enterprising path, where ambition should supply to me the pleasures and excitements that others found among friends and home.

I now perceived how unsuitable would be to me the quiet monotony of a peasant's life — how irksome

the recurrence of the same daily occupations, the routine of ceaseless labour, the intercourse with those whose views and hopes strayed not beyond their own hedge-rows. A soldier's life appeared to realize all that I looked for; but then, the conversation of the piper recurred to me, and I remembered how he painted these men to me as mere hireling bravos, to whom glory or fame were nothing, merely actuated by the basest passions, the slaves of tyranny. All the atrocities he mentioned of the military in the past year came up before me, and with them the brave resistance of the people in their struggle for independence. How my heart glowed with enthusiasm as I thought over the bold stand they had made, and how I panted to be a man, and linked in such a cause. Every gloomy circumstance in my own fate seemed as the result of that grinding oppression under which my country suffered, even to the curse vented on me by one whose ruin and desolation lay at my own father's door. My temples throbbed, and my heart beat painfully against my side, as I revolved these thoughts within me; and when I rose from my bed that morning I was a rebel with all my soul.

The day, like the preceding one, was stormy and inclement. The rain poured down without ceasing, and the dark, louring sky gave no promise of better things. The household of the cottage remained all at home, and betook themselves to such occupations as indoor permitted. The women sat down to their spinning-wheels — some of the men employed themselves in repairing their tools, and others in making nets for fishing; but all were engaged. Meanwhile, amid the sounds of labour were mixed the busy hum

of merry voices, as they chatted away pleasantly, with many a story and many a song lightening the long hours of the dark day. As for me, I longed impatiently for Darby's return — a thousand half-formed plans were flitting through my mind, and I burned to hear whether Basset was still in pursuit of me — what course he was adopting to regain me within his control — if Darby had seen my friend Bubbleton, and whether he showed any disposition to befriend and protect me. These and such like thoughts kept passing through my mind; and as the storm would shake the rude door, I would stand up with eagerness, hoping every moment to see him enter. But the day moved on, and the dusky half-light of a wintry afternoon was falling, and Darby made not his appearance. When I spoke of him to the others, they expressed no surprise at his absence, merely remarking that he was always uncertain — no one knew when to expect him — that he rarely came when they looked for him, and constantly dropped in when no one anticipated it.

"There he is now, then," said one of the young men, springing up and opening the door — "I hear his voice in the glen."

"Do you see him, Maurice?" cried Malone. "Is it him?"

The young man stepped back, his face pale as death, and his mouth partly open. He whispered a word in the old man's ear, to which the other responded —

"Where?" The youth pointed with his finger. "How many are they?" was his next question, while his dark eye glanced towards the old musket that hung on the wall above the fire.

“Too many, too many for us,” said Maurice, bitterly.

The women, who had gathered around the speaker, looked at each other with an expression of utter wretchedness, when one of them, breaking from the others, rushed into the little inner room off the kitchen, and slammed the door violently behind her. The next instant the sound of voices was heard from the room, as if in altercation. Malone turned round at once, and, throwing the door wide open, called out —

“Be quiet, I say. There’s not a moment to be lost. Maurice, put that gun away — Shamus, take up your net again — sit down, girls.”

At the same instant he drew from his bosom a long horse pistol, and, having examined the loading and priming, replaced it within his waistcoat, and sat down on a chair beside the fire, his strongly-marked countenance fixed on the red blaze, while his lips muttered rapidly some words to himself.

“Are ye ready there?” he cried, as his eyes were turned towards the small door.

“In a minit,” said the woman from within.

At the same instant the sounds of voices and the regular tramp of men marching were heard without.

“Halt! stand at ease,” called out a deep voice, and the clank of the muskets as they fell to the ground was heard through the cabin. Meanwhile, every one within had resumed his previous place and occupation, and the buzz of voices resounded through the kitchen, as though no interruption whatever had taken place. The latch was now lifted, and a sergeant, stooping to permit his tall feather to pass in, entered, followed by a man in plain clothes.

The latter was a short, powerfully-built man, of about fifty; his hair of a grizzly grey, contrasted with the deep purple of his countenance, which was swollen and bloated — the mouth, its most remarkable feature, was large and thick-lipped — the under lip projecting considerably forward, and having a strange, convulsive motion when he was not speaking.

"It's a hard day, Mister Barton," said Malone, rising from his seat, and stroking down his hair with one hand. "Won't ye come over and take an air of the fire?"

"I will, indeed, Ned," said he, taking the proffered seat, and stretching out his legs to the blaze. "It's a severe season we have. I don't know how the poor are to get in the turf; the bogs are very wet entirely."

"They are, indeed, Sir; and the harvest 'ill be very late getting in now," said one of the young men, with a most obsequious voice. "Won't ye sit down, Sir?" said he to the sergeant.

A nod from Mister Barton in acquiescence decided the matter, and the sergeant was seated.

"What's here, Mary?" said Barton, striking the large pot that hung over the fire with his foot.

"It's the boys' dinner, Sir," said the girl.

"I think it wouldn't be a bad job if we joined them," replied he, laughingly — "eh, sergeant?"

"There 'ill be enough for us all," said Malone — "and I'm sure ye 're welcome to it."

The table was quickly spread, the places next the fire being reserved for the strangers; while Malone, unlocking a cupboard, took down a bottle of whiskey, which he placed before them, remarking, as he did so —

"Don't be afeard, gentlemen -- 't is parliament."

"That's right, Malone. I like a man to be loyal in these bad times; there's nothing like it. Faith, Mary, you're a good cook — that's as savoury a stew as ever I tasted. Where's Patsey now? I haven't seen him for some time."

The girl's face grew dark-red, and then became suddenly as pale; when, staggering back, she lifted her apron to her face, and leaned against the dresser.

"He's transported for life," said Malone, in a deep sepulchral voice, while all his efforts to conceal agitation were fruitless.

"Oh, I remember," said Barton, carelessly — "he was in the dock with the Hogans — I'll take another bone from you Ned — Sergeant, that's a real Irish dish, and no bad one either."

"What's doing at the town to-day?" said Malone, affecting an air of easy indifference.

"Nothing remarkable I believe; they have taken up that rascal, Darby the Blast, as they call him. The major had him under examination this morning for two hours; and they say, he'll give evidence against the Dillons — a little more fat if ye please — money, you know, Ned, will do any thing these times."

"You ought to know that, Sir," said Maurice, with such an air of assumed innocence, as actually made Barton look ashamed. In an instant, however, he recovered himself, and pretended to laugh at the remark. "Your health, sergeant — Ned Malone, your health — ladies, yours, and boys the same." A shower of "thank ye, Sir's," followed this piece of unlooked-for courtesy. "Who's that boy there, Ned?" said he, pointing to me, as I sat with my eyes rivetted upon him.

"He's from this side of Banagher, Sir," said Malone, evading the question.

"Come over here, younker. What's his name?"

"Tom, Sir."

"Come over, Tom, till I teach you a toast. Here's a glass, my lad — hold it steady, till I fill you a bumper. Did you ever hear tell of the croppies?"

"No, never."

"Never heard of the croppies! well you're not long in Ned Malone's company any how — eh? ha! ha! ha! Well, my man, the croppies is another name for the rebels, and the toast I'm going to give you is about them. So mind you finish it at one pull — here now, are you ready?"

"Yes, quite ready," said I, as I held the brimming glass straight before me.

"Here's it then:

'May every croppy taste the rope,
And find some man to hang them;
May Bagnal Harvey and the pope
Have Heppenstal to hang them.'"

I knew enough of the meaning of his words to catch the allusion, and dashing the glass with all my force against the wall, I smashed it in a hundred pieces. Barton sprang from his chair, his face dark with passion, clutching me by the collar with both hands he cried out, "Holloa there without, bring in the handcuffs here. As sure as my name's Sandy Barton, we'll teach you that toast practically, and that ere long."

"Take care what you do there," said Malone fiercely; "that young gentleman is a son of Matthew Burke of Cremore; his relatives are not the kind of people figure in your riding-house."

"Are you a son of Matthew Burke?"

"I am."

"What brings you here then? — why are you not at home?"

"By what right do you dare to ask me? I have yet to learn how far I am responsible for where I go, to a thief-catcher."

"You hear that, sergeant, you heard him use a word to bring me into contempt before the people, and excite them to use acts of violence towards me."

"No such thing, Mister Barton," said Malone coolly; "nobody here has any thought of molesting you. I told you that young gentleman's name and condition, to prevent you making any mistake concerning him; for his friends are not the people to trifle with."

This artfully-put menace had its effect; Barton sat down again, and appeared to reflect for a few minutes, then taking a roll of paper from his pocket, he began leisurely to peruse it — the silence at this moment was something horribly oppressive.

"This is a search-warrant, Mr. Malone," said Barton, laying down the paper on the table, "empowering me to seek for the body of a certain French officer, said to be concealed in these parts. Informations on oath state that he passed, at least, one night under your roof. As he has not accepted the amnesty granted to the other officers in the late famous attempt against the peace of this country, the law will deal with him as strict justice may demand; at the same time, it is right you should know that harbouring or sheltering him, under these circumstances, involves the person or persons so doing in his guilt. Mr. Malone's well-

known and tried loyalty," continued Barton, with a half grin of most malicious meaning, "would certainly exculpate him from any suspicion of this nature; but sworn informations are stubborn things, and it is possible that, in ignorance of the danger such a proceeding would involve —"

"I thought the thrubbles was over, Sir," interrupted Malone, wiping his forehead with the back of his hand, "and that an honest, industrious man, that minded his own business, had nothing to fear from any one."

"And you thought right," said Barton, slowly and deliberately, while he scanned the other's features with a searching look; "and that is the very fact I'm come to ascertain; and now, with your leave, we'll first search the house and offices; and then I'll put a little interrogatory to such persons as I think fit, touching this affair."

"You're welcome to go over the cabin whenever you like," said Malone, rising, and evidently labouring to repress his passionate indignation at Barton's coolness.

Barton stood up at the same moment, and giving a wink at the sergeant to follow, walked towards the small door I've already mentioned. Malone's wife at this started forward, and, catching Barton's arm, whispered a few words in his ear.

"She must be a very old woman by this time," said Barton, fixing his sharp eyes on the speaker.

"Upwards of ninety, Sir, and bed-ridden for twelve years," said the woman, wiping a tear away with her apron.

"And how comes it she's so afraid of the soldiers, if she's doating?"

“Arrah, they used to frighten her so much, coming in at night, and firing shots at the doore, and drinking and singing songs, that she never got over it, and that’s the rayson. I’ll beg of your honour not to bring in the sergeant, and to disturb her only as little as you can, for it sets her raving about battles and murders, and it’s maybe ten days before we’ll get her mind at ease again.”

“Well, well, I’ll not trouble her,” said he quickly. “Sergeant, step back for a moment.”

With this he entered the room, followed by the woman, whose uncertain step and quiet gesture seemed to suggest caution.

“She’s asleep, Sir,” said she, approaching the bed. “It’s many a day since she had as fine a sleep as that. ’Tis good luck you brought us this morning, Mister Barton.”

“Draw aside the curtain a little,” said Barton in a low voice, as if fearing to awake the sleeper.

“’Tis rousing her up, you’ll be, Mister Barton. She feels the light at wanst.”

“She breathes very long for so old a woman,” said he somewhat louder, “and has a good broad shoulder too. I’d like if it was only for curiosity just to see her face a little closer. — I thought so. — Come, captain, it’s no use —”

A scream from the woman drowned the remainder of the speech, while at the same instant one of the young men shut to the outside door, and barred it. The sergeant was immediately pinioned with his hands behind his back, and Malone drew his horse pistol from his bosom, and holding up his hand, called out —

“Not a word — not a word. If ye spake, it will

be the last time ever you'll do so," said he to the sergeant.

At the same moment the noise of a scuffle was heard in the inner room, and the door burst suddenly open, and Barton issued forth, dragging in his strong hands the figure of a young, slightly-formed man. His coat was off, but his trowsers were braided with gold, in military fashion; and his black moustache denoted the officer. The struggle of the youth to get free was utterly fruitless Barton's grasp was on his collar, and he held him as though he were a child.

Malone stooped down towards the fire, and opening the pan of his pistol, examined the priming; then slapping it down again he stood erect.

"Barton," said he, in a tone of firm determination I heard him use for the first time — "Barton, it's bad to provoke a man with the halter round his neck. I know what's before me well enough now. But, see, let him escape — give him two hours to get away — and here I'll surrender myself your prisoner, and follow you where you like."

"Break in the door there, blast ye," was the reply to this offer, as Barton shouted to the soldiers at the top of his voice. Two of the young men darted forward as he spoke and threw themselves against it. "Fire through it," cried Barton, stamping with passion.

"You will have it, will you then," said Malone, as he ground his teeth in anger; then raising his pistol he sprang forward, and holding it within a yard of Barton's face, shouted out, "there." The powder flashed in the lock, and quick as its own report, Barton hurled the Frenchman round to protect him from the ball, but only in time to receive the shot in his right arm as he

held it uplifted. The arm fell powerless to his side, while Malone springing on him like a tiger, grasped him in his powerful grip, and they both rolled upon the ground in terrible conflict. The Frenchman stood for an instant like one transfixed, then bursting from the spot dashed through the kitchen to the small room I had slept in. One of the young men followed him. The crash of glass, and the sounds of breaking wood-work were heard among the other noises, and at the same moment the door gave way in front, and the soldiers with fixed bayonets entered at a charge.

"Fire on them! fire on them!" shouted Barton, as he lay struggling on the ground; and a random volley rang through the cabin, filling it with smoke. A yell of anguish burst forth at the moment, and one of the women lay stretched upon the hearth, her bosom bathed in blood. The scene was now a terrible one; for although overpowered by numbers, the young men rushed on the soldiers, and, regardless of wounds, endeavoured to wrest their arms from them. The bayonets glanced through the blue smoke, and shouts of rage and defiance rose up amid frightful screams of suffering and woe. A bayonet stab in the side, received I know not how, sent me half fainting into the little room, through which the Frenchman had escaped. The open window being before me, I did not deliberate a second, but, mounting the table, crept through it, and fell heavily on the turf outside. In a moment after I rallied, and staggering onwards, reached a potato-field, where, overcome by pain and weakness, I sank into one of the furrows, scarcely conscious of what had occurred.

Weak and exhausted as I was, I could still hear the sounds of the conflict that raged within the cabin.

Gradually, however, they grew fainter and fainter, and at last subsided altogether. Yet I feared to stir; and although night was now falling, and the silence continued unbroken, I lay still, hoping to hear some well-known voice, or even the footstep of some one belonging to the house; but all was calm, and nothing stirred. The very air, too, was hushed: not a leaf moved in the thin frosty atmosphere. The dread of finding the soldiers in possession of the cabin made me fearful of quitting my hiding-place, and I did not move. Some hours had passed over, ere I gained courage enough to raise my head, and look about me.

My first glance was directed towards the distant high-road, where I expected to have seen some of the party who attacked the cabin; but far as my eye could reach, no living thing was to be seen;—my next was towards the cabin, which, to my horror and amazement, I soon perceived was enveloped in a thick, dark smoke, that rolled lazily from the windows and doorway, and even issued from the thatched roof. As I looked, I could hear the crackling of timber and the sound of wood burning. These continued to increase; and then a red forked flame shot through one of the casements, and, turning upwards, caught the thatch, where, passing rapidly across the entire roof, it burst into a broad sheet of fire, which died out again as rapidly, and left the gloomy smoke triumphant.

Meanwhile a roaring sound, like that of a furnace, was heard from within; and at last, with an explosion like a mortar, the roof burst open, and the bright blaze sprung forth; the rafters were soon enveloped in fire, and the heated straw rose into the air, and floated in thin streaks of flame through the black sky. The door-

cases and the window-frames were all burning, and marked their outlines against the dark walls; and as the thatch was consumed, the red rafters were seen like the ribs of a skeleton, but they fell in one by one, sending up in their descent millions of red sparks into the dark air. The back wall of the cabin had given way to the heat, and through its wide fissure I could see the interior, now one mass of undistinguishable ruin; nothing remained, save the charred and blackened walls.

I sat gazing at this sad sight like one entranced: sometimes it seemed to me as a terrible dream; and then the truth would break upon me with fearful force, and my heart felt as though it would burst far beyond my bosom. The last flickering flame died away; the hissing sounds of the fire were stilled; and the dark walls stood out against the bleak back-ground in all their horrible deformity, as I rose and entered the cabin. I stood within the little room where I had slept the night before, and looked out into the kitchen, around whose happy hearth the merry voices were so lately heard. I brought them up before me, in imagination, as they sat there. One by one I marked their places in my mind, and thought of the kindness of their welcome to me, and the words of comfort and encouragement they spoke. The hearth was now cold and black; the pale stars looked down between the walls, and a chill moonlight flickered through the gloomy ruin. My heart had no room for sorrow, but another feeling found a place within it — a savage thirst for vengeance — vengeance upon those who had desecrated a peaceful home, and brought blood and death among its inmates! Here was the very realization

before my eyes of what M'Keown had been telling me; here the horrible picture he had drawn of tyranny and outrage. In these humble cottagers I saw but simple-minded peasants, who had opened their doors to some poor unfriended outcast — one who, like myself, had neither house nor home: I saw them offering their hospitality to him who sought it, freely and openly; and at last, adventuring all they possessed in the world, rather than betray him — and their reward was this. Oh, how my heart revolted at such oppression; how my spirit fired at such indignity; I thought a life passed in opposition to such tyranny were too short a vengeance, and I knelt me down beside that blackened hearth, and swore myself its enemy to the death.

CHAPTER VI.

My education.

As I thought over the various incidents the last few days of my life had presented, I began to wonder with myself whether the world always went on thus; and if the same scenes of misery and woe I had witnessed were in the ordinary course of nature. The work of years seemed to me to have been accomplished in a few brief hours. Here, where I stood, but yesterday, a happy family were met together; and now, death and misfortune had laid waste the spot; and, save the cold walls, nothing marked it as a human habitation. What had become of them? Where had they gone to? Had they fled from the blood-stained hands of the cruel soldiery, or were they led away to prison? These were the questions constantly recurring to my mind: and the French officer, too — what of him? I felt the deepest interest in his fate. Poor fellow! he looked so

pale and sickly; and yet there was something both bold and manly in his flashing eye and compressed lip. He was doubtless one of those Darby alluded to. What a lot was his; and how little did my own sorrows seem, as I compared them with his houseless, friendless condition! As my thoughts thus wandered on, a dark shadow fell across the gleam of moonlight that lit up the ruined cabin. I turned suddenly, and saw the figure of a man leaning against the door-post. For a second or two fear was uppermost in my mind, but rallying soon, I called out — “Who’s there?”

“’Tis me, Darby M’Keown,” said a well-known voice, but in a tone of deepest sorrow: “I came over to have a look at the ould walls once more.”

“You heard it all, then, Darby?”

“Yes: they wor bringing the prisoners into Athlone as I left the town; and I thought to myself you’d maybe be hiding somewhere hereabouts. Is the captain away — is he safe?”

“The French officer — yes — he escaped early in the business. I know he must be far off by this time. Heaven knows which way though.”

“Maybe I could guess,” said Darby quietly. “Well, well, it’s hard to know what’s best. Sometimes it would seem the will of God that we aren’t to succeed; and, if we hadn’t right on our side, it would not be easy to bear up against such misfortunes as these.”

There was a silence on both sides after these words, during which I pondered them well in my mind.

“Come, Master Tom,” said Darby, suddenly; “’t is time we were moving. You’re not safe here no more nor others. Basset is looking for you everywhere, and you’ll have to leave the neighbourhood for a while, at

least. Your friend, the captain, too, is gone; his regiment marched yesterday; so now make up your mind what to do."

"That's easily done, Darby," said I, attempting to seem at ease; "whichever is your road shall be mine, if you let me."

"Let you — yes, with a hearty welcome, too, my darling; but the first thing is to get you some clothes that won't discover on you. Here's a hat I squeezed into my own that 'ill just fit you, and I've a coat here that's about your size — that's enough for the present, and as we go along I'll teach you your part, how you are to behave, and he'll be no fool that 'ill find you out after ten days or a fortnight."

My change of costume was soon effected, and my wound, which turned out to be a trifling one, looked after; I took a farewell look at the old walls, and stepped after my companion down the boreen.

"If we make haste," said Darby, "we'll be beyond Shannon harbour before day; and then, when we're on the canal, we'll easy get a lift in some of the boats going to Dublin."

"And are you for Dublin?" inquired I, eagerly.

"Yes: I'm to be there on the twenty-fourth of this month, please God. There's a meeting of the friends of Ireland to be then, and some resolutions will be taken about what's to be done. There's bad work going on in the parliament."

"Indeed, Darby! what is it?"

"Oh! you couldn't understand it well: but it's just as if we warn't to have any thing to say to governing ourselves, only be made slaves of, and sent abroad to

fight for the English, that always hate us and abuse us."

"And are we going to bear with this?" cried I, passionately.

"No," said Darby, laying his hand on my shoulder — "no, not at least if we had twenty thousand like you, my brave boy. But you'll hear every thing yourself soon; and now, let me attend to your education a bit, for we're not out of the enemy's country."

Darby now commenced his code of instruction to me, by which I learned that I was to perform a species of second to him in all minstrelsy — not exactly on the truest principles of harmony, but merely alternating with him in the verses of his songs. These, which were entirely of his own composition, were all to be learned, and orally, too, for Mister M'Keown was too jealous of his copyright ever to commit them to writing, and especially charged me never to repeat any lyric in the same neighbourhood.

"It's not only the robbery I care for," quoth Darby, "but the varmint destroys my poethry completely — sometimes changing the words, injuring the sentiments, and even altering the tune. Now it's only last Tuesday I heerd 'Behave politely' to the tune of 'Look how he sarved me.'"

Besides the musical portion of my education, there was another scarcely less difficult to be attended to: this was, the skilful adaptation of our melodies not only to the prevailing tastes of the company, but to their political and party bearings — Darby supplying me with various hints how I was to discover at a moment the peculiar bias of any stranger's politics.

"The boys," said Darby, thereby meaning his own

party, "does be always sly and careful, and begin by asking, maybe, for 'Do you incline?' or 'Crows in the barley,' or the like. Then they'll say, 'Have you any thing new, Mister M'Keown, from up the counthry?' 'Something sweet, is it?' says I. 'Ay, or sour, av ye have it,' they'll say. 'Maybe ye'd like Vinegar-hill, then,' says I. Arrah, you'd see their faces redden up with delight, and how they'll beat time to every stroke of the tune — it's a pleasure to play for them. But the yeos (meaning the yeomen) will call out mightily — 'Piper — holloa there, piper, I say — rise the Boyne Water, or Croppies lie down.'"

"And, of course, you refuse, Darby?"

"Refuse — refuse, is it — and get a bayonet in me? Devil a bit, my dear. I'll play it up with all the spirit I can; and nod my head to the tune, and beat the time with my heel and toe; and, maybe, if I see need of it, I fasten this to the end of the chaunter, and that does the business entirely."

Here Darby took from the lining of his hat a bunch of orange ribbon, whose faded glories showed it had done long and active service in the cause of loyalty.

I confess Darby's influence over me did not gain any accession of power by this honest avowal of his political expediency; and the bold assertion of a nation's wrongs, by which, at first, he won over my enthusiasm, seemed sadly at variance with this truckling policy. He was quick-sighted enough to perceive what was passing in my mind, and at once remarked —

"'T is a hard part we're obliged to play, Master Tom, but one comfort we have — it's only a short time we'll need it. You know the song."

Here he broke into the popular tune of the day:—

“And the French will come again,
Says the Shan van vaugh,
And they ’ll bring ten thousand men,
Says the Shan van vaugh,
And, with powder and with ball,
For our rights we ’ll loudly call;
Don’t you think they ’ll hear us then?
Says the Shan van vaugh.

“Ye must larn that air, Master Tom; and see, now, the yeos is as fond of it as the boys, only remember to put their own words to it; and devil a harm in that same, when one’s not in earnest. See, now, I believe it’s a natural pleasure for an Irishman to be humbugging somebody; and, faix, when there’s nobody by, he’d rather be taking a rise out of himself than doing nothing. It’s the way that’s in us, God help us! Sure it’s that same makes us sich favourites with the ladies, and gives us a kind of native ganius for coortin’ —

“’T is the look of his eye
And a way he can sigh
Makes Paddy a darlin’ wherever he goes;
With a sugary brogue,
Ye ’d hear the rogue
Cheat the girls before their nose.

“And why not? — Don’t they like to be chated, when they’re sure to win after all? — to win a warm heart and a stout arm to fight for them.”

This species of logic I give, as a specimen of Mister M’Keown’s power of — if not explaining away a difficulty — at least, getting out of all reach of it — an attribute almost as Irish as the cause it was employed to defend.

As we journeyed along, Darby maintained a strict reserve as to the event which had required his presence

in Athlone, nor did he allude to the major but passingly, observing that —

“He didn’t know how it happened that a Dublin magistrate should have come up to these parts, though, to be sure, he’s a great friend of the Right Honourable.”

“And who is he?” asked I.

“The Right Honourable! Don’t you know, then? Why, I didn’t think there was a child in the county couldn’t tell that. Sure, it’s Denis Browne himself.”

The name seemed at once to suggest a whole flood of recollections, and Darby expatiated for hours long on the terrible power of a man, in whose hands life and death were distributed, without any aid from judge or jury — thus opening to me another chapter of the lawless tyranny to which he was directing my attention, and by which he already saw my mind was greatly influenced.

About an hour after daybreak we arrived at a small cabin, which served as a lock-house on the canal-side. It needed not the cold, murky sky, nor the ceaseless pattering of the rain, to make this place look more comfortless and miserable than any thing I had ever beheld. Around, for miles in extent, the country was one unbroken flat, without any trace of wood, or even a single thorn hedge, to relieve the eye. Low, marshy meadows, where the rank flaggers and reedy grass grew tall and luxuriant, with here and there some stray patches of tillage, were girt round by vast plains of bog, cut up into every variety of trench and pit. The cabin itself, though slated and built of stone, was in bad repair, the roof broken in many places, and the window mended with pieces of board, and even straw.

As we came close, Darby remarked that there was no smoke from the chimney, and that the door was fastened on the outside.

"That looks bad," said he, as he stopped short about a dozen paces from the hovel, and looked steadily at it; "they've taken him too."

"Who is it, Darby?" said I. "What did he do?"

M'Keown paid no attention to my question, but unfastening the hasp which attached the door, without any padlock, entered. The fire was yet alive on the hearth, and a small stool, drawn close to it, showed where some one had been sitting: there was nothing unusual in the appearance of the cabin; the same humble furniture and cooking utensils lying about, as were seen in any other. Darby, however, scrutinized every thing most carefully; looking everywhere, and into every thing, till, at last, reaching his hand above the door, he pulled out, from the straw of the thatch, a small piece of dirty and crumpled paper, which he opened with the greatest care and attention; and then flattening it out with his hand, began to read it over to himself, his eye flashing, and his cheek growing redder, as he pored over it. At last he broke silence with —

"'Tis myself never doubted ye, Tim, my boy. Look at that, Master Tom — but sure you wouldn't understand it, after all. The yeos took him up last night. 'Tis something about cutting the canal, and attacking the boat, that's again him; and he left that there — that bit of paper, to give the boys courage that he wouldn't betray them. That's the way the cause will prosper — if we'll only stick by each other. For many a time, when they take a man up, they spread it about

that he's turned informer against the rest, and then the others gets careless, and don't mind whether they're taken or not."

Darby replaced the piece of paper carefully, and then, listening for a moment, exclaimed —

"I hear the boat coming; let's wait for it outside."

While he employed himself in getting his pipes into readiness, I could not help ruminating on the strength of loyalty to each other the poor people observed amid every temptation and every seduction — how, in the midst of such misery as theirs, neither threats nor bribery seemed to influence them, was a strong testimony in favour of their truth, and to such a reasoner as I was, a no less cogent argument for the goodness of the cause that elicited such virtues.

As the boat came alongside, I remarked that the deck was without a passenger; heaps of trunks and luggage littered it the entire way; but the severity of the weather had driven every one under cover, except the steersman and the captain, who, both of them wrapped up in thick coats of frize, seemed like huge bears standing on their hind quarters.

"How are you, Darby?" shouted the skipper; "call out that lazy rascal to open the lock."

"I don't think he's at home, Sir," said Darby, as innocently as though he knew nothing of the reason for his absence.

"Not at home! — the scoundrel, where can he be, then? Come, youngster," cried he, addressing me, "take the key there, and open the lock."

Until this moment, I forgot the character which my dress and appearance assigned to me; but a look from the piper recalled me at once to recollection; and, ta-

king up the iron key, I proceeded, under Darby's instructions, to do what I was desired, while Darby and the captain amused themselves by wondering what had become of Tim, and speculated on the immediate consequences his absence would bring down on him.

"Are you going with us, Darby?" said the captain.

"Faix, I don't know, Sir," said he, as if hesitating; "av there was any gentleman that liked the pipes —"

"Yes, yes, come along, man," rejoined the skipper: "is the boy with you? — very well — come in, youngster."

We were soon under weigh again; and Darby, having arranged his instrument to his satisfaction, commenced a very spirited voluntary to announce his arrival. In an instant the cabin-door opened, and a red-faced, coarse-looking fellow, in uniform, called out —

"Holloa, there — is that a piper?"

"Yes, Sir," said Darby, without turning his face round, while, at the same time, he put a question, in Irish, to the skipper, who answered it with a single word.

"I say, piper, come down here," cried the yeoman, for such he was; "come down here, and let's have a tune."

"I 'm coming, Sir," cried Darby, standing up; and holding out his hand to me, he called out, "Tom, alannah, lead me down stairs."

I looked up in his face, and, to my amazement, perceived that he had turned up the white of his eyes, to represent blindness, and was groping with his hand, like one deprived of sight.

As any hesitation on my part might have betrayed him at once, I took his hand, and led him along, step by step, to the cabin door. I had barely time to perceive that all the passengers were habited in uniform, when one of them called out —

“We don’t want the young fellow; let him go back. Piper, sit down here.”

The motion for my exclusion was passed without a negative, and I closed the door, and sat down by myself among the trunks on deck.

For the remainder of the day I saw nothing of Darby: the shouts of laughter and clapping of hands, below stairs, occasionally informing me how successful were his efforts to amuse his company; while I had abundant time to think over my own plans, and make some resolutions for the future.

CHAPTER VII.

Kevin-street.

How this long, melancholy day wore on I cannot say; to me it was as gloomy in reverie as in its own dismal aspect: the very sounds of mirth that issued from the cabin beneath grated harshly on my ear; and the merry strains of Darby’s pipes and the clear notes of his rich voice seemed like treachery from one, who so lately had spoken in terms of heart-breathing emotion of his countrymen and their wrongs. While therefore my estimation for my companion suffered, my sorrow for the cause that demanded such sacrifices deepened at every moment, and I panted with eagerness for the moment when I might take my place among the bold defenders of my country, and openly dare our oppressors to the battle. All that M’Keown had told me of

English tyranny and oppression was connected in my mind with the dreadful scene I had so lately been a witness to, and for the cause of which I looked no further than an act of simple hospitality. From this I wandered on to the thought of those brave allies who had deserted their career of continental glory to share our almost hopeless fortunes here; and how I burned to know them, and learn from them something of a soldier's ardour.

Night had fallen, when the fitful flashing of lamps between the tall elms that lined the banks announced our approach to the capital. There is something dreadfully depressing in the aspect of a large city to the poor unfriended youth, who, without house or home, is starting upon his life's journey: the stir — the movement — the onward tide of population, intent on pleasure or business, are things in which he has no part. The appearance of wealth humiliates, while the sight of poverty affrights him; and while every one is animated by some purpose, he alone seems like a waif thrown on the shores of life, unclaimed — unlooked for. Thus did I feel among that busy crowd who now pressed to the deck, gathering together their luggage, and preparing for departure. Some home awaited each of these; some hearth, some happy faces to greet their coming; but I had none of these. This was a sorrowful thought; and as I brooded over it, my head sank upon my knees, and I saw nothing of what was going forward about me.

"Tom," whispered a low voice in my ear — "Master Tom, don't delay, my dear: let us slip out here. The soldiers want me to go with them to their billets; and I have promised — but I mean not to do it."

I looked up. It was Darby, buttoned up in his coat, his pipes unfastened for the convenience of carriage.

"Slip out after me at the lock here. It's so dark, we'll never be seen."

Keeping my eye on him, I elbowed my way through the crowded deck, and sprang out just as the boat began her forward movement.

"Here we are all safe," said Darby, patting me on the shoulder; "and now that I've time to ask you, did you get your dinner, my child?"

"Oh, yes; the captain brought me something to eat."

"Come, that's right anyhow! Glory be to God! I ate heartily of some bacon and greens, though the blackguards — bad luck to them for the same — made me eat an orange lily whole, afraid the *greens*, as they said, might injure me."

"I wonder, Darby," said I, "that you haven't more firmness than to change this way at every moment?"

"Firmness, is it? Faith it's firm enough I'd be, and stiff too, if I didn't — sure it's the only way now at all. Wait, my honey, till the time comes round for ourselves, and faith you'll never accuse me of coorting their favour; but now — at this moment, you perceive — we must do it to learn their plans. What do you think I got to-night? I learned all the signs the yeos have when they're drinking together, and what they say at each sign. There's a way they have of gripping the two little fingers together — that I'll not forget soon."

For some time we walked on at a rapid pace, with-

out exchanging more than an occasional word. At last we entered a narrow, ill-lighted street, which led from the canal harbour to one of the larger and wider thoroughfares.

"I almost forget the way here," said Darby, stopping and looking about him. At last, unable to solve the difficulty, he leaned over the half-door of a shop, and called out to a man within — "Can you tell where is Kevin-street?"

"No. 39?" says the man, after looking at him steadily for a moment.

Darby stroked down one side of his face with his hand slowly, a gesture immediately imitated by the other man.

"What do you know?" said Darby.

"I know 'U,'" replied the man.

"And what more?"

"I know 'N.'"

"That 'ill do," said Darby, shaking hands with him cordially. "Now, tell me the way: for I have no time to spare."

"Begorra, you're in as great haste as if ye were Darby the Blast himself. Ye'll come in and take a glass."

Darby only laughed; and again excusing himself, he asked the way, which having learned, he wished his newly-made friend good night, and we proceeded.

"They know you well hereabouts, by name at least," said I, when we had walked on a little.

"That they do," said Darby proudly. "From Wexford to Belfast, there's few doesn't know me; and they'll know more of me, av I'm right, before I die."

This he spoke with more of determination than I ever heard him use previously.

"Here's the street now: there's the lamp — that one with the two burners there. Faix, we've made good track since morning, anyhow."

As he spoke, we entered a narrow passage, through which the street-lamp threw a dubious half light. This conducted us to a small paved court, crossing which we arrived at the door of a large house, which appeared in total darkness. Darby knocked in a peculiar manner, and the door was speedily opened by a man, who whispered something, to which M'Keown made answer in the same low tone.

"I'm glad to see you again," said the man louder, as he made way for him to pass.

I pushed forward to follow, when suddenly a strong arm was stretched across my breast, and a gruff voice asked —

"Who are you?"

Darby stepped back and said something in his ear: the other replied sturdily in the negative; and although Darby, as it appeared, used every power of persuasion he possessed, the man was inexorable. At last, when the temper of both appeared nearly giving way, Darby turned to me, and said —

"Wait for me a moment, Tom, where you are, and I'll come for you."

So saying, he disappeared, and the door closed at the same time, leaving me in darkness on the outside. My patience was not severely taxed — ere five minutes the door opened, and Darby, followed by another person, appeared.

"Mr. Burke," said this latter, with the tone of

voice that at once bespoke a gentleman, "I am proud to know you." He grasped my hand warmly as he spoke, and shook it affectionately. "I esteem it an honour to be your sponsor here. Can you find your way after me? This place is never lighted — but I trust you'll know it better ere long."

Muttering some words of acknowledgment, I followed my unseen acquaintance along the dark corridor.

"There's a step here," cried he, "and now mind the stairs."

A long and winding flight conducted us to a landing where a candle was burning in a tin sconce. Here my conductor turned round.

"Your Christian name is Thomas, I believe," said he; at the same moment, as the light fell on me, he started suddenly back with an air of mingled astonishment and chagrin. "Why, M'Keown, you told me —." The rest of the sentence was lost in a whisper.

"It's a disguise I made him wear," said Darby; "he'd no chance of escaping the country without it."

"I'm not speaking of that," retorted the other angrily. "It is his age, I mean — he's only a boy. How old are you, Sir?" continued he, addressing me, but with far less courtesy than before.

"Old enough to live for my country, or die for it either, if need be," said I haughtily.

"Bravo, my darling," cried the piper, slapping me on the shoulder with enthusiasm.

"That's not exactly my question," said the stranger, smiling good naturedly; "I want to know your age."

"I was fourteen in August," said I.

"I had rather you could say twenty," responded he thoughtfully. "This is a sad mistake of yours, Darby."

What dependance can be placed on a child like this? — he's only a child after all."

"He's a child I'll go bail for with my head," said Darby.

"Your head has fully as much on it, as it is fit to carry," said the other in a tone of rebuke. "Have you told him any thing of the object and intentions of this society? But of course you have revealed every thing. Well, I'll not be a party to this business. Young gentleman," continued he, in a voice of earnest and impressive accent, "all I know of you is the few particulars this man has stated respecting your unfriended position, and the cruelty to which you fear to expose yourself in trusting to the guardianship of Mr. Basset. If these reasons have induced you, from recklessness and indifference, to risk your life, by association with men who are actuated by high and noble principles, then I say, you shall not enter here. If however, aware of the object and intentions of our union, you are desirous to aid us, young though you be, I shall not refuse you."

"That's it," interrupted Darby — "if you feel in your heart a friend to your country —"

"Silence," said the other harshly; "let him decide for himself."

"I neither know your intentions, nor even guess at them," said I, frankly. "My destitution and the poor prospect before me, make me, as you suppose, indifferent to what I embark in, provided that it be not dishonourable. It is not danger will deter me, that's all I can promise you."

"I see," said the stranger, "this is but another of your pranks, M'Keown. The young gentleman was

to be kidnapped amongst us. One thing," said he, turning to me, "I feel assured of, that any thing you have witnessed here is safe within your keeping, and now, we'll not press the matter further; in a few days you can hear, and make up your mind on all these things, and as you are not otherwise provided, let us make you our guest in the meanwhile."

Without giving me time to reply, he led me down stairs again, and, unlocking a door on the second floor, passed through several rooms until he reached one comfortably fitted up like a study.

"You must be satisfied with a sofa here for to-night, but to-morrow I will make you more comfortable."

I threw my eyes over the well-filled book-shelf with delight, and was preparing to thank him for all his kindness to me, when he added —

"I must leave you now, but we'll meet to-morrow; so good night." "Come along, M'Keown, we shall want you presently."

I would gladly have detained Darby to interrogate him about my new abode and its inhabitants, but he was obliged to obey, and I heard the door locked, as they closed it, on the outside; and shortly after, the sounds of their feet died away, and I was left in silence.

Determined to con over, and, if possible, explain to myself the mystery of my position, I drew my sofa towards the fire and sat down, but fatigue, stronger than all my curiosity, had the mastery, and I was soon sound asleep.

CHAPTER VIII.

No. 39, and its frequenters.

WHEN my eyes opened the following morning, it was quite pardonable in me if I believed I was still dreaming. The room, which I had scarcely time to look at the previous evening, now appeared handsomely, almost richly furnished. Books in handsome bindings covered the shelves, prints in gilded frames occupied the walls, and a large mirror filled the space above the chimney. Various little articles of taste, in bronze and marble, were scattered about; and a silver tea equipage, of antique pattern, graced a small table near the fire. A pair of splendidly-mounted pistols hung at one side of the chimney-glass, and a gorgeously-gilt sabre occupied the other.

While I took a patient survey of all these, and was deliberately examining myself as to how and when I had first made their acquaintance, a voice from an adjoining room, the door of which lay open, exclaimed —

“*Sacristi! quel mauvais temps!*” and then broke out into a little French air, to which, after a minute, the singer appeared to move, in a kind of dancing measure. “*Oui c’est ça!*” exclaimed he in rapture, as he whirled round in a pirouette, overturning a dressing-table and its contents with a tremendous crash upon the floor.

I started up, and, without thinking of what I was doing, rushed in.

“*Ha! bon jour,*” said he gaily, stretching out two fingers of a hand almost concealed beneath a mass of rings; and then suddenly changing to English, which he spoke perfectly, saving with a foreign accent —

"How did you sleep? I suppose the *tintamarre* awoke you."

I hastened to apologize for my intrusion, which he stopped at once by asking if I had passed a comfortable night, and had a great appetite for breakfast.

Assuring him of both facts, I retreated into the sitting-room, where he followed me, laughing heartily at his mishap, which he confessed he had not patience to remedy; "and what's worse," added he, "I have no servant. But, some tea and coffee — let us chat while we eat."

I drew over my chair at his invitation, and found myself, before half an hour went by, acted on by that strange magnetism which certain individuals possess, to detail to my new friend the principal events of my simple story, down to the very moment in which we sat opposite to each other. He listened to me with the greatest attention, occasionally interposing a question, or asking an explanation of something which he did not perfectly comprehend; and when I concluded, he paused for some minutes, and then, with a slight laugh, said —

"You don't know how you disappointed the people here. Your travelling companion had given to understand that you were some other Burke, whose alliance they have been long desiring. In fact, they were certain of it; but," said he, starting up hastily, "it is far better as it is. I suspect, my young friend, the way in which you have been entrapped. Don't fear; we are perfectly safe here. I know all the hacknied declamations about wrongs and slavery that are in vogue, and I know, too, how timidly they shrink from every enterprise by which their cause might be honourably,

boldly asserted. I am myself another victim to the assumed patriotism of this party. I came over here two years since to take a command. A command! but in what an army! An undisciplined rabble without arms, without officers, without even clothes — their only notion of warfare a midnight murder, or a reckless and indiscriminate slaughter. The result could not be doubtful — utter defeat and discomfiture. My countrymen, disgusted at the scenes they witnessed, and ashamed of such '*confrérie*,' accepted the amnesty, and returned to France. I —"

Here he hesitated, and blushed slightly; after which he resumed —

"I yielded to a credulity for which there was neither reason nor excuse. I remained: promises were made me — oaths were sworn — statements were produced, to show how complete the organization of the insurgents really was, and to what purpose it might be turned. I drew up a plan of a campaign — corresponded with the different leaders — encouraged the wavering — restrained the headstrong — confirmed the hesitating, and, in fact, for fourteen months, held them together, not only against their opponents, but their own more dangerous disunion; and the end is — what think you? — I only learned it yesterday, on my return from an excursion in the west, which nearly cost me my life. I was concealed in a cabin in woman's clothes —"

"At Malone's, in the Glen?"

"Yes: how did you know that?"

"I was there. I saw you captured, and witnessed your escape."

"*Diantre!* How near it was!"

He paused for a second, and I took the opportunity to recount to him the dreadful issue of the scene, with the burning of the cabin. He grew sickly pale as I related the circumstance; then flushing as quickly, he exclaimed —

“We must look to this; these people must be taken care of. I’ll speak to Dalton — you know him?”

“No: I know not one here.”

“It was he who met you last night: he is a noble fellow. But stay, there’s a knock at the door.”

He approached the fire-place, and, taking down the pistols which hung beside it, walked slowly towards the door.

“’T is Darby, Sir — Darby the Blast, coming to speak a word to Mister Burke,” said a voice from without.

The door was opened at once, and Darby entered. Making a deep reverence to the French officer, in whose presence he seemed by no means at his ease, Darby dropped his voice to its most humble cadence, and said —

“Might I be so bould as to have a word with ye, Master Tom?”

There was something in the way this request was made, that seemed to imply a desire for secrecy — so, at least, the Frenchman understood it — and turning hastily round, he said —

“Yes, to be sure; I’ll go into my dressing-room; there is nothing to prevent you speaking here.”

No sooner was the door closed, than Darby drew a chair close to me, and, bending down his head, whispered —

“Don’t trust him — not from here to that window:

they 're going to do it without him — Mahony told me so himself: but my name was not drawn, and I'm to be off to Kildare this evening. There's a meeting of the boys at the Curragh, and I want you to come with me."

The state of doubt and uncertainty which had harassed my mind for the last twenty-four hours was no longer tolerable; so I boldly asked M'Keown for an explanation as to the people in whose house I was — their objects and plans — and how far I was myself involved in their designs.

In fewer words than I could convey it, Darby informed me that the house was the meeting-place of the United Irishmen, who still cherished the hope of reviving the scenes of '98: that — conscious the failure before was attributable to their having taken the field as an army, when they should have merely contented themselves with secret and indirect attacks — they had resolved to adopt a different tactique. It was, in fact, determined that every political opponent to their party should be marked — himself, his family, and his property; that no opportunity was to be lost of injuring him or his; and, if need be, of taking away his life: that various measures were to be propounded to parliament by their friends; to the maintenance of which threats were to be freely used to the government members; and, with respect to the great measure of the day — the Union — it was decided, on the night of the division, a certain number of people should occupy the gallery above the ministerial benches, armed with hand grenades, and other destructive missiles — that, on a signal given, these were to be thrown amongst them, scattering death and ruin on all sides.

"It will be seen, then," said Darby, with a fiendish grin, "how the enemies of Ireland pay for their hatred of her. Maybe they'll vote away their country after that!"

Whether it was the tone, the look, or the words that suddenly awoke me from my dreamy infatuation, I know not; but coming so soon after the Frenchman's detail of the barbarism of the party, a thorough disgust seized me, and the atrocity of this wholesale murder lost nothing of its blackness from being linked with the cause of liberty.

With ready quickness, Darby saw what my impression was, and hastily remarked —

"We'll be all away out of this, Master Tom, you know, before that. We'll be up in Kildare, where we'll see the boys exercising and marching; that's what'll do your heart good to look at. But, before we go, you'll have to take the oath; for I'm answerable for you all this time with my own head: not that I care for that same, but others might mistrust ye."

"Holloa!" cried the Frenchman, from within, "I hope you have finished your conference there; for you seem to forget there's no fire in this room."

"Yes, Sir; and I beg a thousand pardons," said Darby, servilely: "and Master Tom only wants to bid you good-by before he goes."

"Goes! goes where? are you so soon tired of me?" said he, in an accent of most winning sweetness.

"He's obliged to be at the Curragh, at the meeting there," said Darby, answering for me.

"What meeting? I never heard of it."

"It's a review, Sir, of the throops, that's to be by moonlight."

"A review!" said the Frenchman, with a scornful laugh: "and do you call this midnight assembly of marauding savages a review?"

Darby's face grew dark with rage, and for a second, I thought he would have sprung on his assailant, but with a fawning, shrewd smile he lisped out —

"It's what they call it, captain; sure the poor boys knows no better."

"And are you going to this *review*?" said the Frenchman, with an ironical pronunciation of the word.

"I scarce know where to go, or what to do," said I, in a tone of despairing sadness; "any certainty would be preferable to the doubts that harass me."

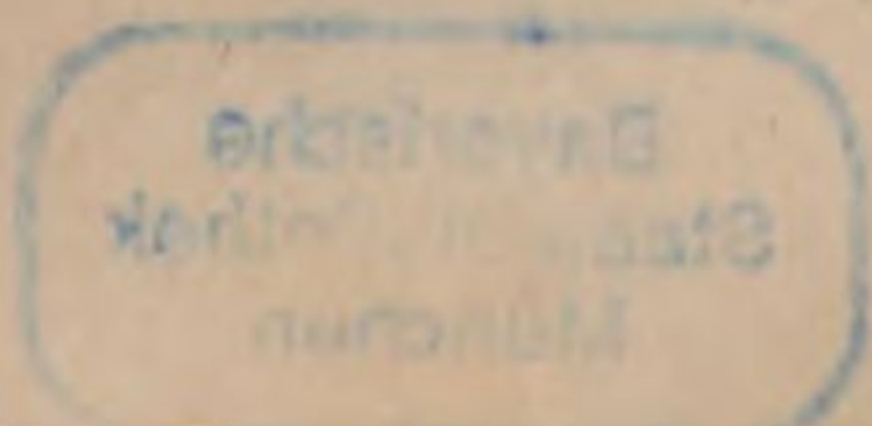
"Stay with me," said the Frenchman, interrupting me, and laying his hand on my shoulder — "we shall be companions to each other: your friend here knows I can teach you many things that may be useful to you hereafter, and perhaps, with all humility I may say, your stay will be as profitable as at the *camp* yonder."

"I should not like to desert one who has been so kind to me as Darby, and if he wishes —"

Before I could finish my sentence, the door was opened by a key from without, and Dalton, as he was called, stood amongst us.

"What! Darby," said he, in a voice of something like emotion, "not gone yet: you know I forbid you coming up here; I suspected what you would be at. Come lose no more time, we'll take care of Mr. Burke for you."

Darby hung his head sorrowfully and left the room without speaking, followed by Dalton, whose voice I heard in a tone of anger, as he descended the stairs.



There was a certain openness — an easy air of careless freedom in the young Frenchman, which made me feel at home in his company, almost the very moment of our acquaintance; and when he asked some questions about myself and my family, I hesitated not to tell him my entire history, with the causes which had first brought me into Darby's society, and led me to imbibe his doctrines and opinions. He paused when I finished, and, after reflecting for some minutes, he looked me gravely in the face, and said —

“But you are aware of the place you are now in?”

“No,” said I; “farther than the fact of my having enjoyed a capital night's rest and eaten an excellent breakfast, I know nothing about it.”

A hearty burst of laughter from my companion followed this very candid acknowledgment on my part.

“Then, may I ask, what are your intentions for the future? — have you any?”

“At least one hundred,” said I, smiling; “but every one of them has about as many objections against it. I should like much, for instance to be a soldier — not in the English service though. I should like to belong to an army, where neither birth nor fortune can make or mar a man's career. I should like, too, to be engaged in some great war of liberty, where with each victory we gained, the voices of a liberated people would fall in blessings upon us; and then I should like to raise myself to high command by some great achievement.”

“And then,” said the Frenchman, interrupting, “to come back to Ireland, and cut off the head of this terrible Monsieur Basset. *N'est-ce pas, Tom?*”

I could not help joining in his laugh against my-

self, although in good truth I had felt better pleased if he had taken up my enthusiasm in a different mood.

"So much for mere dreaming," said I, with half a sigh, as our laughter subsided.

"Not so," said he, quickly, "not so; all you said is far more attainable than you suspect. I have been in such a service myself — I won my 'grade' as officer, at the point of my sword, when scarcely your age; and before I was fifteen received this."

He took down the sword that hung over the chimney as he said these words, and drawing it from the scabbard, pointed to the inscription which, in letters of gold, adorned the blade — "Rivoli," "Arcola;" then turning the reverse, I read — "à Lieutenant Charles Gustave de Meudon, 3me Cuirassiers."

"This, then, is your name?" said I, repeating it half aloud.

"Yes," replied he, as he drew himself up, and seemed struggling to repress a feeling of pride that sent the blood rushing to his cheek and brow.

"How I should like to be you," was the wish that burst from me at that moment, and which I could not help uttering in words.

"*Hélas! non!*" said the Frenchman sorrowfully, and turning away to conceal his agitation. "I have broken with fortune many a day since."

The tone of bitter disappointment in which these words were spoken, left no room for reply, and we were both silent.

Charles — for so I must now call him to my reader, as he compelled me to do so with himself — Charles was the first to speak.

"Not many months ago my thoughts were very like

your own; but since then how many disappointments — how many reverses!”

He walked hurriedly up and down the room as he said this; then stopping suddenly before me, laid his hand on my shoulder, and, with a voice of impressive earnestness, said —

“Be advised by me — join not with these people; do not embark with them in their enterprise. Their enterprise!” repeated he scornfully — “they have none. The only men of action here are they with whom no man of honour, no soldier could associate — their only daring some deed of rapine and murder. No: liberty is not to be achieved by such hands as these; and the other — the men of political wisdom, who prate about reform and the people’s rights, who would gladly see such as me adventure in the cause they do not dare themselves to advocate, they are all false alike. Give me,” cried he with energy, and stamping his foot upon the ground — “give me a demi-brigade of ours, some squadrons of Milhaud’s cavalry, and ‘*trois bouches à feu*,’ to open the way before us; but why do I speak of this? — some midnight burning, some savage murder, some cowardly attack on unarmed and defenceless people — these are our campaigns here; and shall I stain this blade in such a conflict?”

“But you will go back to France?” said I, endeavouring to say something that might rally him from his gloom.

“Never,” replied he firmly — “never. I alone of all my countrymen maintained, that to leave the people here at such a crisis was unfair and unmanly. I alone believed in the representations that were made of extended organization. Of high hopes, and ardent ex-

pectations, I accepted the command of their army — their army! what a mockery! When others accepted the amnesty, I refused, and lived in concealment, my life hanging upon the chance of being captured: for fourteen months I have wandered from county to county, endeavouring to rally the spirit I had been taught to think only needed restraint to hold back its impetuous daring. I have spent money largely, for it was largely placed at my disposal — I have distributed places and promises — I have accepted every post where danger offered, and in return, I hoped that the hour was approaching when we should test the courage of our enemies, by such an outbreak as would astonish Europe — and what think you has all ended in? — but my cheek burns at the very thought — an intended attack on the government members of parliament — an act of base assassination — a cowardly murder; and for what, too? to prevent a political union with England! Have they forgotten that our cause was total rupture! independence! open enmity with England! But, *c'est fini*. I have given them my last resolve. Yesterday evening I told the delegates the only chance that, in my opinion, existed of their successfully asserting their own independence. I gave them the letters of French officers, high in command and station, concurring with my own views; and I have pledged myself to wait one month longer, if they deem my plans worthy of acceptance, to consider all the details, and arrange the mode of proceeding. If they refuse, then I leave Ireland for ever within a week. In America, the cause I glory in is still triumphant; and there, no prestige of failure shall follow me to damp my own efforts, nor discourage the high hopes of such as trust me. But you, my poor

boy — and how have I forgotten you in all this sad history — I will not suffer you to be misled by false representations and flattering offers. It may be the only consolation I shall carry with me from this land of anarchy and misfortune — but even that is something — if I rescue one untried and uncorrupted heart from the misery of such associates. You shall be a soldier — be my companion here while I stay; I'll arrange every thing for your comfort; we'll read and talk together; and I will endeavour to repay the debt I owe to France, by sending back there, one better than myself to guard her eagles."

The tears ran fast down my cheek as I heard these words, but not one syllable could I utter.

"You do not like my plan; well —"

Before he could conclude, I seized his hand with rapture within both of mine, and pressed it to my lips.

"It is a bargain, then," said he, gaily; "and now let us lose no more time; let us remove this breakfast-table, and begin at once."

Another table was soon drawn over to the fire, upon which a mass of books, maps, and plates, was heaped by my companion, who seemed to act in the whole affair with all the delight of a school-boy in some exploit of amusement.

"You are aware, Tom, that this place is a prison to me, and therefore, I am not altogether disinterested in this proposal. You, however, can go out when you please; but until you understand the precautions necessary to prevent you from being traced here, it is better not to venture into the city."

"I have no wish whatever to leave this," said I, quickly, while I ranged my eye with delight over the

pile of books before me, and thought of all the pleasure I was to draw from their perusal.

"You must tell me so three weeks hence, if you wish to flatter me," replied Charles, as he drew over his chair, and pointed with his hand to another.

It needed not the pleasing and attractive power of my teacher to make my study the most captivating of all amusements. Military science, even in its gravest forms, had an interest for me such as no other pursuit could equal. In its vast range of collateral subjects, it opened an inexhaustible mine to stimulate industry and encourage research. The great wars of the world were the great episodes in history, wherein monarchs and princes were nothing, if not generals. With what delight, then, did I hang over the pages of Carnot and Jomini; with what an anxious heart would I read the narrative of a siege, where, against every disadvantage of numbers and munitions of war, some few resisted all the attacks of the adverse forces, with no other protection save that of consummate skill. With what enthusiasm did I hear of Charles XII., of Wallenstein, of the Prince Eugene; and how oftentimes did I ask myself in secret, why had the world none such as these to boast of now? till at last the name of Buonaparte burst from my companion's lips, as with a torrent of long-restrained devotion, he broke forth into an eloquent and impassioned account of the great general of his age.

That name once heard, I could not bear to think or speak of any other; how I followed him from the siege of Toulon, as he knelt down beside the gun which he pointed with his own hand, to the glorious battle-fields of Italy, and heard from one who listened

to his shout of "*suivez moi*" on the bridge of Lodi, the glorious heroism of that day. I tracked him across the pathless deserts of the East, beneath the shadow of the pyramids, whose fame seems, somehow, to have revived in the history of that great man; and then I listened to the stories — and how numerous were they — of his personal daring — the devotion and love men bore him, the magic influence of his presence, the command of his look, the very short and broken sentences he addressed to his generals, were treasured up in my mind, and repeated over and over to myself. Charles possessed a miniature of the first consul, which he assured me was strikingly like him; and for hours long I could sit and gaze upon that cold unimpassioned brow, where greatness seemed to sit enthroned. How I longed to look upon the broad and massive forehead — the deep-set, searching eye — the mouth, where sweetness and severity seemed tempered — and that finely rounded chin, that gave his head so much the character of antique beauty. His image filled every avenue of my brain: his eye seemed on me in my waking moments, and I thought I heard his voice in my dream. Never did lover dwell more rapturously on the memory of his mistress, than did my boyish thoughts on Buonaparte. What would I not have done to serve him? What would I not have dared, to win one word, one look of his, in praise? All other names faded away before his; the halo around him paled every other star; the victories I had thought of before with admiration, I now only regarded as trifling successes, compared with the overwhelming torrent of *his* conquests. Charles saw my enthusiasm, and ministered to it with eager delight. Every trait in his beloved

leader that could stimulate admiration, or excite affection, he dwelt on with all the fondness of a Frenchman for his idol, till at last the world seemed to my eyes but the theatre for his greatness, and men the mere instruments of that commanding intellect that ruled the destinies, and disposed of the fortunes of nations.

In this way days, and weeks, and even months rolled on; for Charles's interest in my studies had induced him to abandon his former intention of departure, and he now scarcely took any part in the proceedings of the delegates, and devoted himself almost exclusively to me. During the daytime we never left the house; but when night fell we used to walk forth — not into the city, but by some country road, often along the canal side — our conversation on the only topic wherein we felt interested: and these rambles still live within my memory with all the vivid freshness of yesterday; and while my heart saddens over the influence they shed upon my after life, I cannot help the train of pleasure with which, even yet, I dwell upon their recollection. How guarded should he be who converses with a boy, forgetting with what influence each word is fraught, by the mere force of years: how the flattery of equality destroys judgment, and saps all power of discrimination; and more than all, how dangerous it is to graft upon the tender sapling the ripe fruits of experience, not knowing how, in such they may grow to very rankness. Few are there who cannot look back to their childhood for the origin of opinions, that have had their influence over all their latter years; and when these have owed their birth to those we loved, is it wonderful that we should cling to faults which seemed hallowed by friendship?

Meanwhile, I was becoming a man, if not in years, at least in spirit and ambition. The pursuits natural to my age were passed over for the studies of more advanced years. Military history had imparted to me a soldier's valour, and I could take no pleasure in any thing save as it bore upon the one engrossing topic of my mind.

Charles, too, seemed to feel all his own ambition revived in mine, and watched with pride the progress I was making under his guidance.

CHAPTER IX.

The Frenchman's story.

WHILE my life slipped thus pleasantly along, the hopes of the insurgent party fell daily and hourly lower: disunion and distrust pervaded all their councils, jealousies and suspicions grew up among their leaders. Many of those whose credit stood highest in their party became informers to the government, whose persevering activity increased with every emergency; and finally, they who would have adventured every thing but some few months before, grew lukewarm and indifferent. A dogged carelessness seemed to have succeeded to their outbreak of enthusiasm, and they looked on at the execution of their companions, and the wreck of their party, with a stupid and stolid indifference.

For some time previous, the delegates met at rare and irregular intervals, and finally ceased to assemble altogether. The bolder portion of the body disgusted with the weak and temporizing views of the others, withdrew first; and the less determined formed themselves into a new society, whose object was merely to get up petitions and addresses unfavourable to the

great project of the government, a legislative union with England.

From the turn events had taken, my companion, as it may be supposed, took no interest in their proceedings: affecting to think that all was not lost — while in his heart he felt bitterly the disappointment of his hopes — a settled melancholy, unrelieved even by those flashes of buoyancy which a Frenchman rarely loses in any misfortunes, now grew upon him. His cheek grew paler, and his frame seemed wasting away, while his impaired strength and tottering step betrayed that something more than sorrow was at work within him. Still he persevered in our course of study, and notwithstanding all my efforts to induce him to relax in his labours, his desire to teach me grew with every day. For some time a short, hacking cough, with pain in his chest, had seized on him, and although it yielded to slight remedies, it returned again and again. Our night walks were, therefore, obliged to be discontinued, and the confinement to the house preyed upon his spirits, and shook his nerves. Boy as I was, I could not look upon his altered face and attenuated figure, without a thrilling fear at my heart, lest he might be seriously ill. He perceived my anxiety quickly, and endeavoured, with many a cheering speech, to assure me that these were attacks to which he had been long accustomed, and which never were either lasting or dangerous; but the very hollow accents in which he spoke, robbed these words of all their comfort to me.

The winter, which had been unusually long and severe, at length passed away, and the spring, milder and more genial than is customary in our climate, succeeded; the sunlight came slanting down through the

narrow court, and fell in one rich yellow patch upon our floor. Charles started, his dark eyes, hollow and sunk, glowed with unwonted brightness, and his haggard and hollow cheek suddenly flushed with a crimson glow.

"*Mon cher,*" said he, in a voice tremulous with emotion, "I think if I were to leave this I might recover."

The very possibility of his death, until that moment, had never even crossed my mind, and in the misery of the thought I burst into tears. From that hour the impression never left my mind, and every accent of his low, soft voice, every glance of his mild, dark eye, sank into my heart, as though I heard and saw them for the last time. There was nothing to fear now, so far as political causes were concerned, in our removing from our present abode, and it was arranged between us that we should leave town, and take up our residence in the county of Wicklow. There was a small cottage at the opening of Glenmalur which my companion constantly spoke of: he had passed two nights there already, and left it with many a resolve to return and enjoy the delightful scenery of the neighbourhood.

The month of April was drawing to a close, when one morning, soon after sunrise, we left Dublin. A heavy mist, such as often in northern climates ushers in a day of unusual brightness, shrouded every object from our view for several miles of the way. Charles scarcely spoke; the increased exertion seemed to have fatigued and exhausted him, and he lay back in the carriage, his handkerchief pressed to his mouth, and his eyes half closed.

We had passed the little town of Bray, and entered upon that long road which traverses the valley between the two Sugar Loaves, when suddenly the sun burst forth; the lazy mists rolled heavily up the valley and along the mountain sides, disclosing as they went patches of fertile richness, or dark masses of frowning rock. Above this again, the purple heath appeared glowing, like a gorgeous amethyst, as the red sunlight played upon it, or sparkled on the shining granite that rose through the luxuriant herbage. Gradually the ravine grew narrower; the mountains seemed like one vast chain, severed by some great convulsion; their rugged sides appeared to mark the very junction; trunks of aged and mighty trees hung threateningly above the pass; and a hollow echoing sound arose, as the horses trod along the causeway: it was a spot of wild and gloomy grandeur; and as I gazed on it intently, suddenly I felt a hand upon my shoulder, I turned round — it was Charles', his eyes rivetted on the scene, his lips parted with eagerness; he spoke at length, but at first his voice was hoarse and low, by degrees it grew fuller and richer, and at last rolled on, in all its wonted strength and roundness.

“See there — look!” cried he, as his thin attenuated finger pointed to the pass. “What a ravine to defend! The column, with two pieces of artillery in the road; the cavalry to form behind, where you see that open space, and advance between the open files of the infantry; the tirailleurs scattered along that ridge where the furze is thickest, or down there among those masses of rock. *Sacristi!* — what a volume of fire they'd pour down. See how the blue smoke and the ring of the musket would mark them out as they dotted the

mountain side, and yet were unapproachable to the enemy; and think then of the rolling thunder of the eighteen pounders shaking these old mountains, and the long, clattering crash of the platoon following after, and the dark shakos towering above the smoke: and then the loud '*Viva!*' I think I hear it."

His cheek became purple as he spoke, his veins swollen and distended; his voice, though loud, lost nothing of its musical cadence; and his whole look betokened excitement, almost bordering on madness. Suddenly his chest heaved; a tremendous fit of coughing seized him, and he fell forward upon my shoulder. I lifted him up, and what was my horror to perceive that all his vest and cravat were bathed in florid blood, which issued from his mouth. He had burst a blood-vessel in his wild transport of enthusiasm, and now lay pale, cold, and senseless in my arms.

It was a long time before we could proceed with our journey, for, although fortunately the bleeding did not continue, fainting followed fainting for hours after. At length we were enabled to set out again, but only at a walking pace. For the remainder of the day his head rested on my shoulder, and his cold hand in mine, as we slowly traversed the long weary miles towards Glenmalure.

The night was falling as we arrived at our journey's end — here, however, every kindness and attention awaited us; and I soon had the happiness of seeing my poor friend in his bed, and sleeping with all the ease and tranquillity of a child.

From that hour every other thought was merged in my fears for him. I watched, with an agonizing intensity, every change of his malady — I scanned, with

an aching heart, every symptom day by day. How many times has the false bloom of hectic shed happiness over me. How often, in my secret walks, have I offered up my prayer of thankfulness, as the deceitful glow of fever coloured his wan cheek, and lent a more than natural brilliancy to his sunk and filmy eye. The world to me was all nothing, save as it influenced him. Every cloud that moved above, each breeze that rustled, I thought of for him; and when I slept, his image was still before me, and his voice seemed to call me oftentimes in the silence of the night, and when I awoke and saw him sleeping, I knew not which was the reality.

His debility increased rapidly; and although the mild air of summer, and the shelter of the deep valley seemed to have relieved his cough, his weakness grew daily more and more. His character, too, seemed to have undergone a change as great and as striking as that in his health. The high and chivalrous ambition, the soldier-like heroism, the ardent spirit of patriotism that at first marked him, had given way to a low and tender melancholy — an almost womanish tenderness — that made him love to have the little children of the cabin near him, to hear their innocent prattle, and watch their infant gambols. He talked too of home; of the old chateau in Provence, where he was born; and described to me its antiquated terraces and quaint old-fashioned alleys, where as a boy he wandered with his sister.

“*Pauvre Marie!*” said he, as a deep blush covered his pale cheek, “how have I deserted you!” The thought seemed full of anguish for him, and for the remainder of the day he scarcely spoke.

Some days after his first mention of his sister, we were sitting together in front of the cabin, enjoying the shade of a large chesnut tree, which already had put forth its early leaves, and tempered, if it did not exclude, the rays of the sun.

"You heard me speak of my sister," said he, in a low and broken voice. "She is all that I have on earth near to me. We were brought up together as children; learned the same plays; had the same masters; spent not one hour in the long day asunder, and at night we pressed each other's hands, as we sunk to sleep. She was to me all that I ever dreamed of girlish loveliness, of woman's happiest nature; and I was her ideal of boyish daring, of youthful boldness, and manly enterprise. We loved each other — like those who felt they had no need of other affection, save such as sprang from our cradles, and tracked us on through life. Hers was a heart that seemed made for all that human nature can taste of happiness; her eye, her lip, her blooming cheek knew no other expression than a smile; her very step was buoyancy; her laugh rang through your heart as joy-bells fill the air: and yet! and yet! I brought that heart to sorrow, and that cheek I made pale, and hollow, and sunken as you see my own. My cursed ambition, that rested not content with my own path in life, threw its baleful shadow across hers. The story is a short one, and I may tell it to you.

"When I left Provence, to join the army of the south, I was obliged to leave Marie under the care of an old and distant relative, who resided some two leagues from us on the Loire. The chevalier was a widower, with one son about my own age, of whom I knew nothing, save that he had never left his father's house — had

been educated completely at home — and had obtained the reputation of being a sombre, retired book-worm, who avoided the world, and preferred the lonely solitude of a provincial chateau to the gay dissipations of Paris.

“My only fear in entrusting my poor sister in such hands was the dire stupidity of the *séjour* — but as I bid her good-by, I said laughingly — ‘*Prenez-garde, Marie*, don’t fall in love with Claude de Lauzan.’

“‘Poor Claude!’ said she, bursting into a fit of laughter; ‘what a sad affair that would be for him!’ So saying we parted.

“I made the campaign of Italy, where, as I have perhaps too often told you, I had some opportunities of distinguishing myself, and was promoted to a squadron on the field of Arcola. Great as my boyish exultation was at my success, I believe its highest pleasure arose from the anticipation of Marie’s delight when she received my letter with the news. I wrote to her nearly every week, and heard from her as frequently; at the time I did not mark, as I have since done, the altered tone of her letters to me. How gradually the high ambitious daring that animated her early answers, became tamed down into half regretful fears of a soldier’s career; her sorrows for those whose conquered countries were laid waste by fire and sword; her implied censure of a war, whose injustice she more than hinted at, and lastly, her avowed preference for those peaceful paths in life that were devoted to the happiness of one’s fellows, and the worship of Him who deserved all our affection. I did not mark, I say, this change: the bustle of the camp, the din of arms, the crash of mounted squadrons, are poor aids to reflection; and I thought of Marie but as I left her

"It was after a few months of absence I returned to Provence, the *croix d'honneur* on my bosom, the sabre I won at Lodi by my side. I rushed into the room bursting with impatience to clasp my sister in my arms, and burning to tell her all my deeds and all my dangers; she met me with her old affection, but how altered in its form! her gay and girlish lightness, the very soul of buoyant pleasure, was gone; and in its place, a mild, sad smile played upon her lip, and a deep thoughtful look was in her dark brown eye; she looked not less beautiful; no, far from it, her loveliness was increased ten-fold; but the disappointment smote heavily on my heart. I looked about me like one seeking for some explanation, and there stood Claude — pale, still, and motionless before me: the very look she wore, reflected in his calm features, her very smile was on his lips. In an instant the whole truth flashed across me; she loved him. There are thoughts which rend us, as lightning does the rock, opening new surfaces that lay hid since the creation, and tearing our fast-knit sympathies asunder like the rent granite — mine was such. From that hour I hated him; the very virtues that had, under happier circumstances made us like brothers, but added fuel to the flame. My rival, he had robbed me of my sister — he had left me without that one great prize I owned on earth; and all that I had dared and won, seemed poor, and barren, and worthless, since she no longer valued it.

"That very night I wrote a letter to the first consul, I knew the ardent desire he possessed to attach to Josephine's suite, such members of the old aristocracy as could be induced to do so. He had more than

once hinted to me — that the fame of my sister's beauty had reached the Tuilleries; that with such pretensions as hers, the seclusion of a chateau in Provence was ill suited to her. I stated at once my wish that she might be received as one of the ladies of the court, avowing my intention to afford her any sum that might be deemed suitable to maintain her in so exalted a sphere. This, you are not aware, is the mode by which the members of a family express to the consul, that they surrender all right and guardianship in the individual given — tendering to him full power to dispose of her in marriage, exactly as though he were her own father.

“Before day broke my letter was on its way to Paris; in less than a week came the answer accepting my proposal in the most flattering terms, and commanding me to repair to the Tuilleries with my sister, and take command of a regiment *d'élite* then preparing for service.

“I may not dwell on the scene that followed. The very memory of it is too much for my weak and failing spirits. Claude flung himself at my feet and confessed his love; he declared his willingness to submit to any or every thing I should dictate: he would join the army; he would volunteer for Egypt. Poor fellow! his trembling accents and bloodless lip comported ill with the heroism of his words. Only promise that in the end Marie should be his, and there was no danger he would not dare; no course in life, however unsuited to him, he would not follow at my bidding. I know not whether my heart could have withstood such an appeal as this, had I been free to act, but now the die was cast. I handed him the first consul's letter;

he opened it with a hand trembling like palsy, and read it over; he leaned his head against the chimney when he finished, and gave me back the letter without a word. I could not bear to look on him and left the room.

“When I returned he was gone. We left the chateau the same evening for Paris. Marie scarcely spoke one word during the journey — a fatuous stupid indifference to every thing and every one had seized her, and she seemed perfectly careless whither we went. This gradually yielded to a settled melancholy, which never left her. On our arrival in Paris, I did not dare to present myself with her at the Tuilleries; so feigning her ill health as an excuse, I remained some weeks at Versailles, to endeavour by affection and care to overcome this sad feature of her malady. It was about six weeks after this that I read in the *Journal des Débats* an announcement that ‘Claude de Lauzan had accepted holy orders, and was appointed *curé* of La Fleche in Bretagne.’ At first the news came on me like a thunder clap, but after a while’s reflection I began to believe it were, perhaps, the very best thing could have happened; and under this view of the matter I left the paper in Marie’s way.

“I was right. She did not appear the next morning at breakfast, nor the entire day after. The following day the same; but in the evening came a few lines written with a pencil, saying she wished to see me. I went — but I cannot tell you. My very heart is bursting as I think of her, as she sat up in her bed — her long dark hair falling in heavy masses over her shoulders, and her darker eyes flashing with a brightness that seemed like wandering intellect. She fell

upon my neck and cried; her tears ran down my cheek, and her sobs shook me. I know not what I said, but I remember that she agreed to every thing I had arranged for her; she even smiled a sickly smile, as I spoke of what an ornament she would be to the '*belle cour*,' and we parted.

"That was the last good night I ever wished her. The next day she was received at court, and I was ordered to Normandy, thence I was sent to Boulogne, and soon after to Ireland."

"But you have written to her — you have heard from her?"

"Alas! no. I have written again and again, but either she has never received my letters, or she will not answer them."

The tone of sorrow he concluded in, left no room for any effort at consolation, and we were silent; at last he took my hand in his, and as his feverish fingers pressed it, he said —

"'Tis a sad thing when we work the misery of those for whose happiness we would have shed our heart's blood."

CHAPTER X.

The churchyard.

THE excitement caused by the mere narration of his sister's suffering weighed heavily on De Meudon's weak and exhausted frame; his thoughts would flow in no other channel; his reveries were of home and long past years; and a depression far greater than I had yet witnessed, settled down upon his jaded spirits.

"Is not my present condition like a just retribution on my ambitious folly?" was his continued reflection, and so he felt it. With a Frenchman's belief in destiny

he regarded the failure of all his hopes, and the ruin of the cause he had embarked in, as the natural and inevitable consequences of his own ungenerous conduct; and even reproached himself for carrying his evil fortune into an enterprise which, without him, might have been successful. These gloomy forebodings, against which reason was of no avail, grew hourly upon him, and visibly influenced his chances of recovery.

It was a sad spectacle to look on one who possessed so much of good — so many fair and attractive qualities — thus wasting away without a single consolation he could lay to his bruised and wounded spirit. The very successes he once gloried to remember now only added bitterness to his fallen state; to think of what he had been, and look on what he was, was his heaviest affliction, and he fell into a deep brooding melancholy, in which he scarcely spoke, but sat looking at vacancy, waiting as it were for death.

I remember it well. I had been sitting silently by his bedside; for hours he had not spoken, but an occasional deep-drawn sigh showed he was not sleeping. It was night, and all in the little household were at rest; a slight rustling of the curtain attracted me, and I felt his hand steal from the clothes and grasp my own.

“I have been thinking of you, my dear boy,” said he, “and what is to become of you when I’m gone. There, do not sob, the time is short now, and I begin to feel it so; for somehow as we approach the confines of eternity, our mental vision grows clearer and more distinct — doubts that have long puzzled us, seem doubts no longer. Many of our highest hopes and

aspirations — the day-dreams that made life glorious — pass before our eyes, and become the poor and empty pageants of the hour. Like the traveller who, as he journeys along, sees little of the way, but at the last sits down upon some grassy bank, and gazes over the long line of road; so as the close of life draws near, we throw a backward glance upon the past; but how differently does all seem to our eyes — how many of those we envied once, do we pity now; how many who appeared low and humble, whose thoughts seemed bowed to earth, do we now recognise as soaring aloft, high above their fellow-men, like creatures of some other sphere!" He paused — then in a tone of greater earnestness added — "You must not join these people, Tom. The day is gone by when any thing great or good could have been accomplished. The horrors of civil war will ever prevent good men from uniting themselves to a cause, which has no other road save through bloodshed; and many wise ones, who weigh well the dangers, see it hopeless. France is your country — there, liberty has been won; there, lives one great man, whose notice, were it but passingly bestowed, is fame. If life were spared me, I could have served you there — as it is I can do something."

He paused for a while, and then drawing the curtain gently to one side, said —

"Can it be moonlight, it is so very bright?"

"Yes," said I. "The moon is at the full."

He sat up as I spoke, and looked eagerly out through the little window.

"I have got a fancy, how strange too, it is one I have often smiled at in others, but I feel it strongly now

— it is to choose some spot where I shall be laid when I am dead. There is a little ruin at the bottom of this glen, you must remember it well. If I mistake not, there is a well close beside it. I remember resting there one hot and sultry day in July. It was an eventful day too — we beat the king's troops, and took seventy prisoners; and I rode from Arklow down here to bring up some ammunition, that we had secreted in one of the lead mines. Well I recollect falling asleep beside that well, and having such a delightful dream of home, when I was a child, and of a pony which Marie used to ride behind me, and I thought we were galloping through the vineyard, she grasping me round the waist, half laughing, half in fear; and when I awoke I could not remember where I was. I should like to see that old spot again, and I feel strong enough now to try it."

I endeavoured, with all my power of persuasion, to prevent his attempting to walk such a distance, and in the night air too; but the more I reasoned against, the more bent was he on the project, and at last I was obliged to yield a reluctant consent, and assist him to rise and dress.

The energy which animated him at first soon sank under the effort, and before we had gone a quarter of a mile he grew faint and weary, still he persevered, and, leaning heavily on my arm, tottered along.

"If I make no better progress," said he, smiling sadly, "there will be need to assist me coming back."

At last we reached the ruin, which, like many of the old churches in Ireland, was a mere gable, overgrown with ivy, and pierced with a single window, whose rudely-formed arch betokened great antiquity.

Vestiges of the side walls remained in part, but the inside of the building was filled with tomb-stones and grave-mounds, selected by the people as being a place of more than ordinary sanctity; among these the rank dock weeds and nettles grew luxuriantly, and the tall grass lay heavy and matted. We sat for some time looking on this sad spot: a few garlands were withering on some rude crosses of stick, to mark the latest of those who sought their rest there, and upon these my companion's eyes were bent with a melancholy meaning.

How long we sat there in silence I know not, but a rustling of the ivy behind me was the first thing to attract my attention, I turned quickly round, and in the window of the ruin beheld the head of a man bent eagerly in the direction we were in, the moonlight fell upon him at the moment, and I saw that the face was blackened.

"Who 's that?" I called aloud, as with my finger I directed De Meudon to the spot. No answer was returned, and I repeated my question still louder, but still no reply, while I could mark that the head was turned slightly round, as if to speak with some one without. The noise of feet, and the low murmur of several voices, now came from the side of the ruin, and at the same instant some dozen men, their faces blackened, and wearing a white badge on their hats, stood up as if out of the very ground around us.

"What are you doing here at this time of night?" said a hard voice, in tones that boded but little kindness.

"We are as free to walk the country, when we like it, as you are, I hope," was my answer.

"I know his voice well," said another of the crowd: "I told you it was them."

"Is it you that stop at Wild's in the glen?" said the first speaker.

"Yes," replied I.

"And is it to get share of what's going, that ye're come to join us now?" repeated he, in a tone of mockery.

"Be easy, Lanty — 'tis the French officer that behaved so stout up at Ross: it's little he cares for money, as myself knows. I saw him throw a handful of goold among the boys when they stopped to pillage, and bid them do their work first, and that he'd give them plenty after."

"Maybe he'd do the same now," said a voice from the crowd, in a tone of irony; and the words were received by the rest with a roar of laughter.

"Stop laughing," said the first speaker in a voice of command; "we've small time for joking:" as he spoke he threw himself heavily on the bank beside De Meudon, and, placing his hand familiarly on his arm, said in a low but clear voice — "The boys is come up here to-night to draw lots for three men to settle Barton, that's come down here yesterday, and stopping at the barrack there. We knew you warn't well lately, and we didn't trouble you; but now that you're come up of yourself among us, it's only fair and reasonable you'd take your chance with the rest, and draw your lot with the others."

"Arrah he's too weak — the man is dying," said a voice near.

"And if he is," said the other, "who wants his help, sure isn't it to keep him quiet, and not be-thray us."

“The devil a fear of that,” said the former speaker; “he’s thrue to the back bone; I know them that knows him well.”

By this time De Meudon had risen to his feet, and stood leaning upon a tall headstone beside him; his foraging cap fell off in his effort to stand, and his long thin hair floated in masses down his pale cheeks and on his shoulders; the moon was full upon him, and what a contrast did his noble features present to the ruffian band that sat and stood around him.

“And is it a scheme of murder — of cold cowardly assassination you have dared to propose to me?” said he, darting a look of fiery indignation on him who seemed the leader. “Is it thus you understand my presence in your country, and in your cause? think ye, it was for this that I left the glorious army of France — that I quitted the field of honourable war to mix with such as you? Ay! if it were the last word I were to speak on earth I’d denounce you, wretches that stain with blood and massacre the sacred cause the best and boldest bleed for.”

The click of a trigger sounded harshly on my ear, and my blood ran cold with horror; De Meudon heard it too, and continued —

“You do but cheat me of an hour or two, and I am ready.”

He paused as if waiting for the shot, a deadly silence followed, it lasted for some minutes — when again he spoke —

“I came here to-night not knowing of your intentions, nor expecting you; I came here to choose a grave, where, before another week pass over, I hoped to rest; if you will it sooner, I shall not gainsay you.”

Low murmurs ran through the crowd, and something like a tone of pity could be heard mingling through the voices.

"Let him go home then in God's name," said one of the number; "that's the best way."

"Ay, take him home," said another, addressing me. "Dan Kelly's a hard man when he's roused."

The words were repeated on every side, and I led De Meudon forth leaning on my arm, for already the excitement over, a stupid indifference crept over him, and he walked on by my side without speaking.

I confess it was not without trepidation, and many a backward glance towards the old ruin, that I turned homeward to our cabin: there was that in their looks at which I trembled for my companion, nor do I yet know why they spared him at that moment.

CHAPTER XI.

Too late.

THE day which followed the events I have mentioned was a sad one to me. The fatigue and the excitement together brought on fever with De Meudon. His head became attacked, and before evening his faculties began to wander. All the strange events of his chequered life were mixed up in his disturbed intellect, and he talked on for hours about Italy and Egypt, the Tuilleries, La Vendée, and Ireland, without ceasing. The entire of the night he never slept, and the next day the symptoms appeared still more aggravated. The features of his insanity were wilder and less controllable. He lost all memory of me, and sometimes the sight of me at his bedside threw him into most terrific paroxysms of passion; while, at others, he

would hold my hand for hours together, and seem to feel my presence as something soothing. His frequent recurrence to the scene in the churchyard showed the deep impression it had made upon his mind, and how fatally it had influenced the worst symptoms of his malady.

Thus passed two days and nights. On the third morning exhaustion seemed to have worn him into a false calm. His wild, staring eye had become heavier; its movements less rapid; the spot of colour had left his cheek; the mouth was pinched up and rigid; and a flatness of the muscles of the face betokened complete depression. He spoke seldom, and with a voice hoarse and cavernous, but no longer in the tone of wild excitement as before. I sat by his bedside still and in silence, my own sad thoughts my only company. As it grew later, the sleepless days and nights I had passed, and the stillness of the sick room overcame me, and I slept.

I awoke with a start: some dreamy consciousness of neglect had flashed across me, and I sat up. I peeped into the bed, and started back again with amazement. I looked again, and there lay De Meudon on the outside of the clothes, dressed in his full uniform — the green coat and white facing, the large gold epaulettes, the brilliant crosses on the breast; his plumed chapeau lay at one side of him, and his sabre at the other. He lay still and motionless. I held the candle near his face, and could mark a slight smile that curled his cold lip, and gave to his wan and wasted features something of their former expression.

“*Oui, mon cher,*” said he, in a weak whisper, as he took my hand and kissed it, “*c’est bien moi*” —

and then added, "it was another of my strange fancies to put on these once more before I died; and when I found you sleeping, I arose and did so. I have changed something since I wore this last; it was at a ball at Cambaceres."

My joy at hearing him speak once more, with full possession of his reason, was damped by the great change a few hours had worked in his appearance. His skin was cold and clammy; a gluey moisture rested on his cheek, and his teeth were dark and discoloured. A slimy froth, too, was ever rising to his lips as he spoke, while at every respiration his chest heaved and waved like a stormy sea.

"You are thirsty, Charles," said I, stooping over him to wet his lips.

"No," said he, calmly, "I have but one thing which wants relief; it is here."

He pressed his hand to his heart as he spoke, while such a look of misery as crossed his features I never beheld.

"Your heart —"

"Is broken," said he, with a sigh.

For some minutes he said nothing, then whispered —

"Take my pocket-book from beneath my pillow — yes, that's it. There is a letter you'll give my sister — you'll promise me that; well, the other is for Lecharlier, the *chef* of the Polytechnique at Paris — that is for you — you must be *un élève* there. There are some five or six thousand francs — it's all I have now — they are yours. Marie is already provided for — tell her — but no, she has forgiven me long since — I feel it. You'll one day win your grade — high up; yes, you must do so. Perhaps it may

be your fortune to speak with General Buonaparte; if so, I beg you say to him that, when Charles de Meudon was dying — in exile, with but one friend left of all the world, he held this portrait to his lips, and, with his last breath, he kissed it."

The fervour of the action drew the blood to his face and temples, which as suddenly became pale again; a shivering ran through his limbs; a quick heaving of his bosom; a sigh, and all was still. He was dead.

The stunning sense of deep affliction is a mercy from on high. Weak human faculties, long strained by daily communing with grief, would fall into idiocy, were their acuteness not blunted and their perception rendered dull. It is for memory to trace back through the mazes of misery the object of our sorrow, as the widow searches for the corpse of him she loved amid the slain upon the battle-field.

I sat benumbed with sorrow; a vague desire for the breaking day my only thought. Already the indistinct glimmerings of morning were visible, when I heard the sounds of men marching along the road towards the house. I could mark, by the clank of their firelocks and their regular step, that they were soldiers. They halted at the door of the cabin, whence a loud knocking now proceeded.

"Holloa, there," said a voice, whose tones seemed to sink into my very heart — "holloa, Peter, get up and open the door."

"What's the matter?" cried the old man, starting up, and groping his way towards the door.

The sound of several voices and the noise of approaching footsteps drowned the reply; and the same

instant the door of the little room in which I sat opened, and a sergeant entered.

"Sorry to disturb ye, Sir," said he, civilly, "but duty can't be avoided. I have a warrant to arrest Captain de Meudon, a French officer, that is concealed here. May I ask where is he?"

I pointed to the bed.

The sergeant approached, and by the half light could just perceive the glitter of the uniform, as the body lay shaded by the curtain.

"I arrest you, Sir, in the king's name," said he. "Holloa, Kelly, this is your prisoner, isn't he?"

A head appeared at the door as he spoke, and, as the eyes wandered stealthily round the chamber, I recognised, despite the change of colour, the wretch who led the party at the churchyard.

"Come in, d— ye," said the sergeant impatiently; "what are you afraid for? Is this your man? Holloa, Sir," said he, shaking the corpse by the shoulder.

"You must call even louder yet," said I, while something like the fury of a fiend was working within me.

"What!" said the sergeant, snatching up the light, and holding it within the bed. He started back in horror as he did so, and called out — "he is dead."

Kelly sprang forward at the word, and seizing the candle, held it down to the face of the corpse; but the flame rose as steadily before those cold lips as though the breath of life had never warmed them.

"I'll get the reward, anyhow, sergeant, won't I?" said the ruffian, while the thirst for gain added fresh expression to his savage features.

A look of disgust was the only reply he met with, as the sergeant walked into the outer room, and whis-

pered something to the man of the house. At the same instant the galloping of a horse was heard on the causeway; it came nearer and nearer, and ceased suddenly at the door, as a deep voice shouted out —

“Well, all right, I hope, sergeant — is he safe?”

A whispered reply, and a low, muttering sound of two or three voices followed, and Barton — the same man I had seen at the fray in Malone’s cabin — entered the room. He approached the bed, and, drawing back the curtains rudely, gazed on the dead man, while over his shoulder peered the demoniac countenance of the informer, Kelly, his savage features working in anxiety, lest his gains should have escaped him.

Barton’s eye ranged the little chamber till it fell on me, as I sat still and motionless against the wall. He started slightly, and then advancing close, fixed his piercing glance upon me.

“Ha!” cried he, “*you* here? — Well, that is more than I looked for this morning. I have a short score to settle with you. Sergeant, here’s one prisoner for you, at any rate.”

“Yes,” said Kelly, springing forward, “he was at the churchyard with the other; I’ll swear to that.”

“I think we can do without your valuable aid in this business,” said Barton, smiling maliciously. “Come along, young gentleman, we’ll try and finish the education that has begun so prosperously.”

My eyes involuntarily turned to the table where De Meudon’s pistols were lying. The utter hopelessness of such a contest deterred me not. I sprang towards them: but as I did so, the strong hand of Barton was on my collar, and, with a hoarse laugh, he threw me back against the wall as he called out —

"Folly, boy — mere folly; you are quite sure of the rope without that. Here, take him off."

As he spoke, two soldiers seized me on either side, and, before a minute elapsed, pinioned my arms behind my back. In another moment the men fell in, the order was given to march, and I was led away between the files, Kelly following at the rear, while Barton's voice might be heard issuing from the cabin, as he gave his orders for the burial of the body, and the removal of all the effects and papers to the barrack at Glencree.

We might have been about an hour on the road, when Barton overtook us. He rode to the head of the party, and, handing a paper to the sergeant, muttered some words, among which I could only gather the phrase — "committed to Newgate;" then turning round in his saddle, he fixed his eyes on Kelly, who, like a beast of prey, continued to hang upon the track of his victim.

"Well, Dan," cried he, "you may go home again now: I am afraid you've gained nothing this time but character."

"Home!" uttered the wretch, in a voice of agony; "is it face home after this morning's work?"

"And why not, man? Take my word for it, the neighbours will be too much afraid to meddle with you now."

"Oh! Mister Barton — oh, darling! don't send me back there, for the love of heaven! Take me with you," cried the miserable wretch, in tones of heart-moving misery. "Oh! young gentleman," said he, turning towards me, and catching me by the sleeve, "spake a word for me this day."

“Don’t you think he has enough of troubles of his own to think of, Dan?” said Barton, with a tone of seeming kindness. “Go back, man, go back; there’s plenty of work before you in this very county. Don’t lay your hand on me, you scoundrel; your touch would pollute a hangman.”

The man fell back, as if stunned at the sound of these words; his face became livid, and his lips white as snow. He staggered a pace or two, like a drunken man, and then stood stock-still, his eyes fixed upon the road.

“Quick march,” said the sergeant.

The soldiers stepped out again, and, as we turned the angle of the road, about a mile further, I beheld Kelly still standing in the self-same attitude we left him. Barton, after some order to the sergeant, soon left us, and we continued our march till near nine o’clock, when the party halted to breakfast. They pressed me to eat with every kind entreaty, but I could taste nothing, and we resumed our road after half an hour; but the day becoming oppressively hot, it was deemed better to defer our march till near sunset. We stopped, then, during the noon, in a shady thicket near the road-side, where the men, unbuckling their knapsacks and loosening their stocks, lay down in the deep grass, either chatting together or smoking. The sergeant made many attempts to draw me into conversation, but my heart was too full of its own sensations either to speak or listen; so he abandoned the pursuit with a good grace, and betook himself to his pipe at the foot of a tree, where, after its last whiff escaped, he sank into a heavy sleep.

Such of the party as were not disposed for sleep

gathered together in a little knot on a small patch of green grass, in the middle of a beech clump; where, having arranged themselves with as much comfort as the place permitted, began chatting away over their life and its adventures pleasantly and freely. I was glad to seek any distraction from my own gloomy thoughts in listening to them, as I lay only a few yards off; but though I endeavoured with all my might to attend to, and take interest in their converse, my thoughts always turned to him I had lost for ever — the first, the only friend I had ever known.

All care for myself and what fortune awaited me, was merged in my sorrow for him. If not indifferent to my fate, I was at least unmindful of it, and although the words of those near me fell upon my ear, I neither heard nor marked them. From this dreamy lethargy I was at last suddenly aroused by the hearty bursts of laughter that broke from the party, and a loud clapping of hands that denoted their applause of something, or somebody then before them.

“I say, George,” said one of the soldiers, “he’s a queer un too, that piper.”

“Yes — he’s a droll chap,” responded the other solemnly, as he rolled forth a long curl of smoke from the angle of his mouth.

“Can you play ‘Rule Britannia,’ then?” asked another of the men.

“No, Sir,” said a voice, I at once knew to be no other than my friend Darby’s. “No, Sir; but av the ‘Fox’s Lament,’ or ‘Mary’s Dream,’ wasn’t uncongenial to your sentiments, it would be a felicity to me to expatiate upon the same before yez.”

"Eh, Bell," cried a rough voice, "does that beat you now?"

"No," said another, "not a bit; he means he 'll give us something Irish instead; he don't know 'Rule Britannia.'"

"Not know 'Rule Britannia!' why where the devil were you ever bred or born, man — eh?"

"Kerry, Sir, the kingdom of Kerry, was the nativity of my father. My maternal progenitrix emanated from Clare. Maybe you've heard the adage —

'From Kerry his father, from Clare came his mother.
He's more rogue nor fool on one side and the other.'

Not but that, in my humble individuality, I am an exceptionous illustration of the proverbial catastrophe."

Another shout of rude laughter from his audience followed this speech, amid the uproar of which Darby began tuning his pipes, as if perfectly unaware that any singularity on his part had called forth the mirth.

"Well, what are we to have, old fellow, after all that confounded squeaking and grunting?" said he who appeared the chief spokesman of the party.

"'T is a trifling production of my own muse, Sir — a kind of biographical, poetical, and categorical dissertation of the delights, devices, and daily doings of your obaydient servant, and ever submissive slave, Darby the Blast."

Though it was evident very little of this eloquent announcement was comprehended by the party, their laughter was not less ready, and a general chorus proclaimed their attention for the song.

Darby accordingly assumed his wonted dignity of port, and having given some half dozen premonitory flourishes, which certainly had the effect of astonishing

and overawing the audience, he began to the air of "The Night before Larry was stretched" the following ditty: —

"DARBY THE BLAST.

"Oh! my name it is Darby the Blast,
My country is Ireland all over;
My religion is never to fast,
But live, as I wander, in clover;
To make fun for myself every day,
The ladies to plaze when I'm able,
The boys to amuse, as I play,
And make the jugs dance on the table.
Oh! success to the chanter, my dear.

"Your eyes on each side you may cast,
But there isn't a house that is near you
But they're glad to have Darby the Blast,
And they'll tell ye 't is he that can cheer ye.
Oh! 't is he can put life in a feast;
What music lies under his knuckle,
As he plays 'Will I send for the Priest?'
Or a jig they call 'Cover the Buckle.'
Oh! good luck to the chanter, your sowl.

"But give me an audience in rags,
They're illigant people for list'ning;
'T is they that can humour the bags,
As I rise a fine tune at a christ'ning.
There's many a weddin' I make
Where they never get further nor sighing;
And when I perform at a wake,
The corpse looks delighted at dying.
Oh! success to the chanter, your sowl."

"Eh! what's that?" cried a gruff voice; "the corpse does what?"

"'T is a rhetorical amplification, that means, he would if he could," said Darby, stopping to explain.

"I say," said another, "that's all gammon and stuff; a corpse couldn't know what was doing — eh! old fellow?"

"'T is an Irish corpse I was describin'," said Darby, proudly, and evidently, while sore pushed for an ex-

planation, having a severe struggle to keep down his contempt for the company that needed it.

An effort I made at this moment to obtain a nearer view of the party from whom I was slightly separated by some low brushwood, brought my hand in contact with something sharp; I started and looked round, and to my astonishment saw a clasp knife, such as gardeners carry, lying open beside me. In a second I guessed the meaning of this. It had been so left by Darby, to give me an opportunity of cutting the cords that bound my arms, and thus facilitating my escape. His presence was doubtless there for this object — and all the entertaining powers he displayed, only brought forth to occupy the soldiers' attention, while I effected my deliverance. Regret for the time lost was my first thought, my second, more profitable, was not to waste another moment; so kneeling down I managed with the knife to cut some of my fastenings, and after some little struggle freed one arm, to liberate the other was the work of a second, and I stood up untrammelled. What was to be done next, for although at liberty the soldiers lay about me on every side, and escape seemed impossible, besides I knew not where to turn, where to look for one friendly face, nor any one who would afford me shelter. Just then I heard Darby's voice raised above its former pitch, and evidently intended to be heard by me.

"Sure there's Captain Bubbleton, of the forty-fifth regiment, now in Dublin, in George's-st. Barracks. Ay, in George's-st. Barracks," said he, repeating the words as if to impress them on me. "'T is himself could tell you what I say is thrue; and if you wouldn't put confidential authentication on the infirmation of a

poor leather-squeezing timber-tickling crayture like myself, sure you'd have reverential obaydience to your own commissioned captain."

"Well, I don't think much of that song of yours, anyhow, old Blow, or Blast, or whatever your name is. Have you nothing about the service — eh? 'The British Grenadiers,' give us that."

"Yes; 'The British Grenadiers,' that's the tune!" cried a number of the party together.

"I never heard them play but onst, Sir," said Darby meekly, "and they were in sich a hurry that day, I couldn't pick up the tune."

"A hurry! what d' you mean?" said the corporal.

"Yes, Sir, 't was the day but one after the French landed; and the British Grenadiers that you were talking of, was running away towards Castlebar."

"What's that you say there?" cried out one of the soldiers in a voice of passion.

"'T is what they wor running away, Sir," replied Darby, with a most insulting coolness; "and small blame to thim for that same, av they wor frightened."

In an instant the party sprang to their legs, while a perfect shower of curses fell upon the luckless piper, and fifty humane proposals to smash his skull, break his neck and every bone in his body, were mooted on all sides: meanwhile, M'Keown remonstrated in a spirit which in a minute I perceived was not intended to appease their irritation; on the contrary, his apologies were couched in very different guise, being rather excuses for his mishap in having started a disagreeable topic, than any regret for the mode in which he treated it.

"And sure, Sir," continued he, addressing the

corporal, "twasn't my fault av they tuck to their heels, wouldn't any one run for his life av he had the opportunity."

He raised his voice once more at these words with such significance, that I resolved to profit by the counsel if the lucky moment should offer. I had not long to wait — the insulting manner of Darby, still more than his words, had provoked them beyond endurance, and one of the soldiers drawing his bayonet, drove it through the leather bag of his pipes; a shout of rage from the piper, and a knock-down blow that levelled the offender, replied to the insult. In an instant the whole party were upon him — their very numbers, however, defeated their vengeance; as I could hear from the tone of Darby's voice, who, far from declining the combat, continued to throw in every possible incentive to battle, as he struck right and left of him. "Ah! you got that — well done — 't is brave you are — ten against one — devil fear you."

The scuffle by this time had brought the sergeant to the spot, who in vain endeavoured to ascertain the cause of the tumult, as they rolled over one another on the ground, while caps, belts, and fragments of bagpipes, were scattered about on every side. The uproar had now reached its height, and Darby's yells and invectives were poured forth with true native fluency. The moment seemed propitious to me. I was free — no one near; the hint about Bubbleton was evidently intended for my guidance. I crept stealthily a few yards beneath the brushwood, and emerged safely upon the road. The sounds of the conflict, amid which Darby's own voice rose pre-eminent, told me that all were too busily engaged to waste a thought on me.

I pressed forward at my best pace and soon reached the crest of a hill, from which the view extended for miles on every side; my eyes, however, were bent in but one direction — they turned westwards, where a vast plain stretched away towards the horizon, its varied surface presenting all the rich and cultivated beauty of a garden, villas and mansions surrounded with large parks, waving corn fields and orchards, in all the luxuriance of blossom. Towards the east lay the sea, the coast line broken into jutting promontories and little bays, dotted with white cottages, with here and there some white-sailed skiff scarce moving in the calm air. But amid all this outspread loveliness of view, my attention was fixed upon a dense and heavy cloud that seemed balanced in the bright atmosphere far away in the distance; thither my eyes turned, and on that spot was my gaze rivetted, for I knew that beneath that canopy of dull smoke, lay Dublin. The distant murmur of the angry voices still reached me as I stood. I turned one backward look, the road was lonely, not a shadow moved upon it; before me the mountain road descended in a zigzag course till it reached the valley; I sprang over the low wall that skirted the wayside, and with my eyes still fixed upon the dark cloud, I hurried on — my heart grew lighter with every step, and when at length I reached the shelter of a pine wood, and perceived no sign of being pursued, my spirits rose to such a pitch of excitement that I shouted for very joy.

For above an hour my path continued within the shelter of the wood, and when at last I emerged, it was not without a sense of sudden fear that I looked back upon the mountains which frowned above me, and

seemed still so near. I thought, too, I could mark figures on the road, and imagined I could see them moving backwards and forwards, like persons seeking for something, and then I shuddered to think that they too might be at that very moment looking at me; the thought added fresh speed to my flight, and for some miles I pressed forward without even turning once.

It was late in the evening as I drew near the city; hungry and tired as I was, the fear of being overtaken was uppermost in my thoughts, and as I mingled in the crowds that strolled along the roads enjoying the delicious calmness of a summer's eve, I shrank from every eye like something guilty, and feared that every glance that fell on me, was detection itself.

It was not until I entered the city, and found myself traversing the crowded and narrow streets that formed the outskirts that I felt at ease, and inquiring my way to George's-street barracks, I hurried on regardless of the strange sights and sounds about. At that hour, the humbler portion of the population was all astir; their daily work ended, they were either strolling along with their families for an evening walk, or standing in groups around the numerous ballad singers, who delighted their audience with diatribes against "the union," and ridiculous attacks on the ministry of the day. These however, were not always unmolested, for, as I passed on, I saw more than one errant minstrel seized on by the soldiery, and hurried off to the guard-house to explain some uncivil or equivocal allusion to Lord Castlereagh or Mr. Cook. Such evidences of arbitrary power being sure to elicit a hearty groan or shout of derision from the mob, which in turn, was replied to by the soldiers — these

scolding matches giving an appearance of tumult to the town, which on some occasions did not stop short at mere war of words.

In the larger and better streets such scenes were unfrequent — but here patrols of mounted dragoons or police passed from time to time, exchanging as they went, certain signals as to the state of the city; while crowds of people thronged the pathways, and conversed in a low tone, which broke forth now and then into a savage yell as often as some interference on the part of the military seemed to excite their angry passions. At the Castle gates the crowd was more dense, and apparently more daring, requiring all the efforts of the dragoons to keep them from pressing against the railings and leave a space for the exit of carriages, which from time to time issued from the Castle yard. Few of these indeed went forth unnoticed: some watchful eye would detect the occupant as he lay back to escape observation — his name would be shouted aloud, as an inevitable volley of hisses and execrations showered upon him; and in this way were received the names of Mr. Bingham, Colonel Loftus, The Right Hon. Denis Browne, Isaac Corry, and several others who happened that day to be dining with the lord lieutenant, and were now on their way to the House of Commons.

Nothing struck me so much in the scene, as the real or apparent knowledge possessed by the mob of all the circumstances of each individual's personal and political career; and thus the price for which they had been purchased — either in rank, place, or pounds sterling, was cried aloud amid shouts of derision and laughter, or the more vindictive yells of an infuriated populace.

“Ha! Ben, what are you to get for Baltinglass? Boroughs is up in the market. Well, Dick, you won’t take the place — nothing but hard cash. Don’t be hiding, Jemmy. Look at the Prince of Orange, boys. A groan for the Prince of Orange;” here a fearful groan from the mob echoed through the streets. “There’s Luke Fox — ha! stole away;” here followed another yell.

With difficulty I elbowed my way through the densely-packed crowd, and at last reached the corner of George’s-street, where a strong police force was stationed, not permitting the passage of any one either up or down that great thoroughfare. Finding it impossible to penetrate by this way, I continued along Dame-street, where I found the crowd to thicken as I advanced. Not only were the pathways, but the entire streets filled with people — through whom the dragoons could with difficulty force a passage for the carriages, which continued at intervals, to pass down. Around the statue of King William the mob was in its greatest force: not merely the railings around the statue, but the figure itself was surmounted by persons, who, taking advantage of their elevated and secure position, hurled their abuse upon the police and military with double bitterness; these sallies of invective were always accompanied by some humorous allusion, which created a laugh among the crowd beneath, to which, as the objects of the ridicule were by no means insensible, the usual reply was by charging on the people, and a demand to keep back — a difficult precept when pressed forward by some hundreds behind them. As I made my way slowly through the moving mass, I could see that a powerful body of horse pa-

trolled between the mob and the front of the College: the space before which and the iron railings being crammed with students of the University, for so their caps and gowns bespoke them. Between this party and the others, a constant exchange of abuse and insult was maintained, which even occasionally came to blows whenever any chance opportunity of coming in contact, unobserved by the soldiery, presented itself.

In the interval between these rival parties, each member's carriage was obliged to pass, and here each candidate, for the honours of one and the execrations of the other, met his bane and antidote.

"Ha! broken beak, there you go! bad luck to you. Ha! old vulture, Flood."

"Three cheers for Flood, lads," shouted a voice from the College, and in the loud cry the yells of their opponents were silenced, but only to break forth the next moment into further license.

"Here he comes, here he comes," said the mob; "make way there or he'll take you flying. It's himself can do it. God bless your honour, and may you never want a good baste under ye."

This civil speech was directed to a smart, handsome-looking man of about five and forty, who came dashing along on a roan thoroughbred, perfectly careless of the crowd, through which he rode with a smiling face and a merry look. His leathers and tops were all in perfect jockey style, and even to his long-lashed whip he was in every thing a sportsmanlike figure.

"That's George Ponsonby," said a man beside me, in answer to my question; "and I suppose you know who that is?"

A perfect yell from the crowd drowned my reply,

and amid the mingled curses and execrations of the mass, a dark-coloured carriage moved slowly on; the coachman evidently fearful at every step lest his horses should strike against some of the crowd, and thus license the outbreak that seemed only waiting an opportunity to burst forth.

“Ha! Bladderchops, Bloody Jack, are you there?” shouted the savage ring-leaders as they pressed up to the very glasses of the carriage, and stared at the occupant.

“Who is it?” said I, again.

“John Toler, the attorney-general.”

Amid deafening cries of vengeance against him, the carriage moved on, and then rose the wild cheers of the college men to welcome their partizan. A hurrah from the distant end of Dame-street now broke on the ear, which, taken up by those nearer, swelled into a regular thunder, and at the same moment the dragoons cried out to keep back, a lane was formed in a second, and down it came, six smoking thoroughbreds; the postillions in white and silver, cutting and spurring with all their might. Never did I hear such a cheer as now burst forth; a yellow chariot, its panels covered with emblazonry, came flying past; a hand waved in return from the window to the salutation of the crowd, and the name of Tom Conolly of Castle-town rent the very air; two outriders in their rich liveries followed, unable to keep their place through the thick mass that wedged in after the retiring equipage.

Scarcely had the last echo of the voices subsided when a cheer burst from the opposite side, and a waving of caps and handkerchiefs proclaimed that

some redoubted champion of Protestant ascendancy was approaching. The crowd rocked to and fro as question after question poured in.

"Who is it? who is coming," but none could tell, for as yet the carriage, whose horses were heard at a smart trot, had not turned the corner of Grafton-street; in a few moments the doubt seemed resolved, for scarcely did the horses appear in sight when a perfect yell rose from the crowd and drowned the cheers of their opponents. I cannot convey any thing like the outbreak of vindictive passion that seemed to convulse the mob, as a splendidly-appointed carriage drove rapidly past and made towards the colonnade of the parliament-house. A rush of the people was made at the moment, in which, as in a wave, I was borne along in spite of me. The dragoons with drawn sabres pressed down upon the crowd, and a scene of frightful confusion followed; many were sorely wounded by the soldiers, some were trampled under foot, and one poor wretch in an effort to recover himself from stumbling, was supposed to be stooping for a stone, and cut through the skull without mercy. He lay there insensible for some time, but at last a party of the crowd braving every thing, rushed forward and carried him away to an hospital; during this, I had established myself on the top of a lamp-post, which gave me a full view, not only of all the proceedings of the mob, but of the different arrivals as they drew up at the door of the house. The carriage whose approach had been signalized by all these disasters, had now reached the colonnade. The steps were lowered, and a young man of the very handsomest and most elegant appearance, descended slowly from the chariot; his dress

was in the height of the reigning fashion, but withal, had a certain negligence that bespoke one who paid less attention to toilette than that his costume was a thing of course, which could not but be, like all about him, in the most perfect taste. In his hand he held a white handkerchief, which as he carelessly shook, the perfume floated over the savage-looking-half-naked crowd around; he turned to give some directions to his coachman, and at the same moment a dead cat was hurled by some one in the crowd and struck him on the breast, a cry of exultation rending the very air in welcome of this ruffian act: as for him, he slowly moved his face round towards the mob, and as he brushed the dirt from his coat with his kerchief he bestowed on them one look, so full of immeasurable heartfelt contempt, that they actually quailed beneath it; the cry grew fainter and fainter, and it was only as he turned to enter the house that they recovered self-possession enough to renew their insulting shout. I did not need to ask the name, for the yell of bloody Castlereagh shook the very air.

"Make way there — make way, boys!" shouted a rough voice from the crowd, and a roar of laughter, that seemed to burst from the entire street, answered the command, and the same instant a large burly figure advanced through a lane made for him in the crowd, mopping his great bullet-head with a bright scarlet handkerchief.

"Long life to you, Mr. Egan!" shouted one.

"Three cheers for Bully Egan, boys!" cried another, and the appeal was responded to at once.

"Make way, you blackguards, make way I say," said Egan, affecting to be displeased at this display of

his popularity — “don’t you see who ’s coming?” Every eye was turned at once towards Daly’s clubhouse, in which direction he pointed; but it was some minutes before the dense crowd would permit any thing to be seen. Suddenly, however, a cheer arose wilder and louder than any I had yet heard; from the street to the very housetops the cry was caught up and repeated, while a tumultuous joy seemed to rock the crowd as they moved to and fro.

At this moment the excitement was almost maddening; every neck was strained in one direction, every eye pointed thither, while the prolonged cheering was sustained with a roar as deafening as the sea in a storm. At last the crowd were forced back, and I saw three gentlemen advancing abreast: the two outside ones were holding between them the weak and trembling figure of an old and broken man, whose emaciated form and withered face presented the very extreme of lassitude and weakness; his loose coat hung awkwardly on his spare and shrunken form, and he moved along in a shuffling slip-shod fashion. As they mounted the steps of the parliament-house, the cheering grew wilder and more enthusiastic, and I wondered how he who was evidently the object, could seem so indifferent to the welcome thus given him, as with bent-down head he pressed on, neither turning right nor left. With seeming difficulty he was assisted up the steps, when he slowly turned round, and, removing his hat, saluted the crowd. The motion was a simple one, but in its very simplicity was its power. The broad white forehead across which some scanty hair floated; the eye that now beamed proudly forth, was turned upon them, and never was the magic of a look

more striking; for a second all was hushed, and then a very thunder of applause rolled out, and the name of Henry Grattan burst from every tongue. Just then one of the mob, exasperated by a stroke from the flat of a dragoon's sabre, had caught the soldier by the foot and flung him from his saddle to the ground; his comrades flew to his rescue at once, and charged the crowd, which fell back before them. The college men taking advantage of this, sprang forward on the mob armed with their favourite weapons, their hurdles of strong oak; the street was immediately torn up behind, and a shower of paving stones poured in upon the luckless military, now completely hemmed in between both parties. Yells of rage and defiance rose on either side, and the cheers of the victors and cries of the wounded, were mixed in mad confusion. My lamp-post was no longer an enviable position, and I slipped gently down towards the ground; in doing so, however, I unfortunately kicked off a soldier's cap. The man turned on me at once and collared me, and notwithstanding all my excuses insisted on carrying me off to the guard-house. The danger of such a thing at once struck me, and I resisted manfully. The mob cheered me, at which the soldier only became more angry; and ashamed, too, at being opposed by a mere boy, he seized me rudely by the throat. My blood rose at this, and I struck boldly at him, my fist met him in the face, and before he could recover himself the crowd were upon him. Down he went, while a rush of the mob, escaping from the dragoons, flowed over his body; at the same moment the shout "guard, turn out" was heard from the angle of the bank, and the clattering of arms and the roll of a drum followed.

A cheer from the mob seemed to accept the challenge, and every hand was employed tearing up the pavement and preparing for the fray. Whether by my own self-appointment, or by common consent, I cannot say, but I at once took the leadership, and having formed the crowd into two parties, directed them, if hard pressed, to retreat either by College-street or Westmoreland-street. Thus one party could assist the other by enfilading the attacking force, unless they were in sufficient strength to pursue both together. We had not long to wait the order of battle. The soldiers were formed in a second, and the word was given to advance at a charge. The same instant I stepped forward and cried, "Fire!" Never was an order so obeyed — a hundred paving stones showered down on the wretched soldiers, who fell here and there in the ranks. "Again!" I shouted to my second battalion, that stood waiting for the word, and down came another hail-storm, that rattled upon their caps and muskets, and sent many a stout fellow to the rear. A wild cheer from the mob proclaimed the victory, but at the same instant a rattling of ramrods, and a clank of firelocks, was heard in front; and from the rear of the soldiers a company marched out in *échelon*, and drew up as if on parade. All was stilled, not a man moved in the crowd, indeed our tactics seemed now at an end, when suddenly the word, "make ready — fire," was called out, and the same instant a ringing discharge of musketry tore through the crowd. Never did I witness such a scene as followed. All attempts to retreat were blocked up by the pressure from behind; and the sight of the wounded, who fell by the discharge of the soldiers, seemed to paralyze every

effort of the mob. One terrified cry rose from the mass, as they shrank from the muskets. Again the ramrods were heard clinking in the barrels. I saw there was but one moment, and cried out, "courage, lads, and down upon them!" and with that I dashed madly forward, followed by the mob that, like a mighty mass, now rolled heavily after me. The soldiers fell back as we came on; their bayonets were brought to the charge, the word "fire low" was passed along the line, and a bright sheet of flame flashed forth, and was answered by a scream of anguish that drowned the crash of the fire. In the rush backwards I was thrown on the ground, and at first believed I had been shot, but I soon perceived I was safe and sprang to my legs; but the same moment a blow on the head from the butt-end of a musket, smote me to the earth, and I neither saw nor heard of any thing very clearly afterwards. I had, indeed, a faint dreamy recollection of being danced upon and trampled by some hundred heavy feet, and then experiencing a kind of swinging, rocking motion, as if carried on something; but these sensations are far too vague to reason upon, much less to chronicle.

CHAPTER XII.

A character.

THERE must have been a very considerable interval from the moment I have last recorded to that in which I next became a responsible individual; but in what manner, in what place, or in what company it was passed, the reader must excuse my divulging for many important reasons, one of which is, I never clearly knew any thing of the matter.

To date my recollections from my first consciousness, I may state that I found myself on my back in a very narrow bed, a table beside me covered with phials and small flasks, with paper cravats, some of which hung down, queue fashion, to an absurd extent. A few rush-backed and bottomed chairs lay along the walls, which were coarsely whitewashed. A window, of very unclean and unprepossessing aspect, was partly shaded by a faded scarlet curtain, while the floor was equally sparingly decked with a small and ragged carpet. Where was I, was the frequent but unsatisfactory query I ever put to myself — could this be a prison — had I been captured on that riotous evening, and carried off to a gaol — or was I in Darby M'Keown's territory; for, somehow, a very general impression was on my mind that Darby's gifts of ubiquity were somewhat remarkable; or, lastly, (and the thought was not a pleasant one,) was this the domicile of Anthony Basset, Esq., attorney-at-law? To have resolved any or all of these doubts, by rising and taking a personal survey of the premises, would have been my first thought; but, unluckily, I found one of my arms bandaged, and enclosed in a brace of wooden splints; a very considerable general impression pervaded me of bruises and injuries all over my body; and, worse still, a kind of megrim accompanied every attempt to lift my head from the pillow, that made me heartily glad to lie down again, and be at rest.

That I had not fallen into unfriendly hands was about the extent to which my deductions led me, and with this consolatory fact, and a steady resolve to remain awake three days if necessary, so as to interrogate the first visitor who should approach

me, I mustered all my patience, and waited quietly. What hour of the day it was when first I awoke to even thus much of consciousness I cannot say; but I well remember watching what appeared to me twelve mortal hours in my anxious expectation; at last a key turned in an outer lock, a door opened, and I heard a heavy foot enter. This was shortly followed by another step, whose less imposing tread was, I suspected, a woman's.

"Where, in the devil's name, is the candle?" said a gruff voice, that actually seemed to me not unknown. "I left it on the table when I went out. Oh! my shin's broke — that infernal table!"

"Oh, Lord! oh, Lord!" screamed the female voice.

"Ah! you've caught it too," cried the other, in glee; "did you think you saw a little blue flame before you, when your shin was barked?"

"You're a monster," said the lady, in a tone of passionate indignation.

"Here it is — I have it," replied the other, not paying the slightest attention to the endearing epithet last bestowed; "and d— me, if it's not burned down to the socket. Holloa there, Peter Dodd — you scoundrel, where are you?"

"Call him Saladin," said the lady, with a sneer, "and perhaps he'll answer."

"Imp of darkness, where are you gone to? Peter — Dodd — Dodd — Peter! Ah! you young black-guard, where were you all this time?"

"Asleep, Sir; sure you know well, Sir, it's little rest I get," said a thin, childish voice, in answer. "Wasn't it five o'clock this morning when I divilled

the two kidneys ye had for supper for the four officers, and had to 'borrey' the Kian pepper over the way?"

"I'll bore a gimlet hole through your pineal gland, and stuff it with brass-headed nails, if you reply to me. Anna Maria, that was a fine thought — eh? — glorious, by Jove! There, put the candle there; hand your mistress a chair; give me my *robe de chambre*. Confound me, if it's not getting very like the kingdom of Prussia on the map, full of very straggling dependencies. Supper, Saladin."

"The sorrow taste —"

"What, thou piece of human ebony — what do you say?"

"Me hab no — a — ting in de larder," cried the child, in a broken voice.

"Isn't there a back of a duck and two slices of cold bacon?" asked the lady, in the tone of a cross-examining barrister.

"I poisoned the bacon for the rats, Miss; and for the duck —"

"Let me strangle him with my own hands," shouted the man; "let me tear him up into merry thoughts. Look here, sirrah," said he, in a voice like John Kemble, "there may be nothing which man eats within these walls; there may not be wherewithal to regale a sickly fly, no, not enough for one poor spider to lunch upon; but if you ever dare to reply to me, save in Oriental phrase, I'll throw you in a sack, call my mutes, and hurl you into the Bosphorus."

"Where, Sir?"

"The Dodder, you son of a burnt father. My hookah."

"My slippers," repeated the lady.

"My lute and the sherbet," added the gentleman.

By the stir in the chamber these arrangements, or something equivalent to them, seemed to have taken place, when again I heard —

"Dance a lively measure, Saladin; my soul is heavy."

Here a most vile tinkling of a guitar was heard, to which, by the sounds of the feet, I could perceive Saladin was moving in a species of dance.

"Let the child go to bed, and don't be making a fool of yourself," said the lady, in a voice of bursting passion.

"Thank heaven," said I, half aloud, "*she* isn't mad."

"Tink, tink, a-tink-a-tink, tink-a-tink-a-dido," thrummed out her companion. "I say, Saladin, heat me a little porter, with an egg and some sugar."

The door closed as the imp made his exit, and there was silence for some seconds, during which my uppermost thought was, what infernal mischance has thrown me into a lunatic asylum. At length the man spoke.

"I say, Anna Maria, Cradock has this run of luck a long time."

"He plays better than you," responded the lady, sharply.

"I deny it," rejoined he, angrily; "I play whist better than any man that ever lived, except the Begum of Soutancantarabad, who beat my father. They played for lacs of rupees on the points, and a territory on the rub; five to two, first game against the loser, in white elephants."

"How you do talk," said Anna Maria; "do you forget that all this rubbish doesn't go down with me?"

"Well, I mean old Hickory, that had the snuff-shop in Bath, used only to give me one point in the rub, and we played for sixpence — damme, I'll not forget it; he cleaned me out in no time. 'Tink, tink, a-tink-a-tink, tink-a-tink-a-dido. Here, Saladin, bear me the spicy cup, ambrosial boy!"

"Ahem!" said the lady, in a tone that didn't sound exactly like concurrence.

"Eat a few dates, and then to repose," said the deep voice.

"I wish I had them, av they wor eatable," said Saladin, as he turned away.

"Wretch! you have forgotten to salaam; exit slowly. Tink, tink, a-tink-a-tink. Anna Maria, he's devilish good now for black parts. I think I'll make Jones bring him out. Wouldn't it be original to make Othello talk broken English? Farewell de camp! Eh! by Jove, that's a fine thought. 'The spirit-stir a drum, de piercy pipe;' by Jove, I like that notion."

Here the gentleman rose in a glorious burst of enthusiasm, and began repeating snatches from Shakespeare, in the pleasant travesty he had hit upon.

"Craddock revoked, and you never saw him," said the lady, drily, interrupting the monologue.

"I did see it clearly enough; but I had done so twice the same game," said he gaily; "and if the grave were to give up its dead, I too should be a murderer. Fine thought that! isn't it?"

"He won seventeen-and-sixpence from you," rejoined she, pettishly.

"Two bad half-crowns; dowlas, filthy dowlas," was the answer.

"And the hopeful young gentleman in the next room, what profitable intentions, may I ask you, have you with respect to him?"

"Burke! Tom Burke! Bless your heart, he's only son and heir to Burke of Mount Blazes, in the county Galway. His father keeps three packs of harriers, one of fox and another of stag hounds — a kind of brindled devils, three feet eight in height: he won't take them under. His father and mine were school-fellows at Dundunderamud, in the Hamalaya, and he — that is, old Burke — saved my father's life in a tiger-hunt; and am I to forget the heritage of gratitude my father left me?"

"You ought not, perhaps, since it was the only one he bequeathed," quoth the lady.

"What! Is the territory of Shamdoonah and Bun-funterabad nothing? Are the great suits of red emeralds and blue opal, that were once the crown-jewels of Saidh Sing Doolah, nothing? Is the scimitar of Hafiz, with verses of the Koran in letters of pure brilliants, nothing?"

"You'll drive me distracted with your insane folly," rejoined the lady, rising and pushing back her chair with violence. "To talk this way when you know you haven't got a five-pound note in the world."

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed out the jolly voice of the other; "that's good, faith. If I only consented to dip my Irish property, I could raise fourteen hundred and seventy thousand pounds; — so Mahony tells me. But I'll never give up the royalties — never. There you have my last word on the matter — rather than

surrender my tin-mine, I'd consent to starve on twelve thousand a-year, and resign my claim to the title, which, I believe, the next session will give me; and when you are Lady Machinery — something or other — maybe they won't bite, eh? Ramskins *versus* wrinkles."

A violent bang of the door announced at this moment the exit of the lady in a rage, to which her companion paid no attention, as he continued to mumble to himself —

"Surrender the royalties — never! Oh, she's gone — Well, she's not far wrong after all. I dare not draw a check on my own exchequer at this moment, for a larger sum than — let me see — twenty-four, twenty-five, twenty-eight and tenpence: with twenty-nine shillings, the grand firm of Bubbleton & Co. must shut up and suspend their payments." So saying, he walked from the room in stately fashion, and closed the door after him.

My first thought, as I listened to this speech, was one of gratefulness that I had fallen into the friendly hands of my old coach companion, whose kindness still lived fresh in my memory; my next was, what peculiar form of madness could account for the strange outpouring I had just overheard, in which my own name was so absurdly introduced, coupled with family circumstances I knew never had occurred. Sleep was now out of the question with me; for whole hours long I could do nothing but revolve in my mind all the extraordinary odds and ends of my friend Bubbleton's conversation, which I remembered to have been so struck by at my first meeting with him. The miraculous adventures of his career, his hair-breadth 'scapes, his enormous wealth, the voluptuous ease of his daily

life, and his habits of luxury and expenditure with which he then astounded me, had now received some solution — while, at the same time, there was something in his own common-sense observations to himself, that puzzled me much, and gave a great difficulty to all my calculations concerning him.

To all these conflicting doubts and difficulties sleep at last succeeded: but better far for me it had not; for with it came dreams such as sick men only experience; — all the distorted images that rose before my wandering faculties, mingling with the strange fragments of Bubbleton's conversation, made a phantasmagoria the most perplexing and incomprehensible; and which, even on waking, I could not banish, — so completely had Saladin and his *pas seul*, the guitar, the hookah, and the suit of red emeralds, taken hold of my erring intellect.

Candid, though not fair reader, have you ever been tipsy? Have you ever gone so far ever the boundary line that separates the land of mere sobriety from its neighbouring territory, the country of irresponsible impulses, that you actually doubted which was the way back, that you thought you saw as much good sense and good judgment on the one side of the frontier as the other, with only a strong balance of good fellowship to induce a preference? If you know this state, if you have taken the precise quantum of champagne, or moselle mousseux, that induces it, and yet goes no farther, then do you perfectly understand all the trials and difficulties of my waking moments, and you can appreciate the arduous task I undertook in my effort to separate the real from the imaginary, the true

types from their counterfeits; in a word, the wanderings of my own brain from those of Captain Bubbleton's.

In this agreeable and profitable occupation was I engaged, when the same imposing tread and heavy footstep I had heard the previous evening, entered the adjoining room and approached my door. The lock turned, and the illustrious captain himself appeared, and here let me observe, that if grave censure be occasionally bestowed on persons who by the assumption of voice, look, or costume, seek to terrorize over infant minds, a no less heavy sentence should be bestowed on all who lord it over the frail faculties of sickness by any absurdity in their personal appearance, and that I may not seem captious let me describe my friend. The captain who was somewhere about the forties, was a full-faced, chubby, good-looking fellow, of some five feet ten or eleven inches in height; his countenance had been intended by nature for the expressions of such emotions as arise from the enjoyment of turtle, milk-punch, truffled-turkeys, mulled port, mulligatawney, stilton, stout, and pickled oysters; a rich mellow-looking pair of dark brown eyes, with large bushy eyebrows, meeting above the nose, which latter feature was a little "on the snub, and off the Roman;" his mouth was thick lipped, and had that peculiar mobility which seems inseparable, wherever eloquence or imagination predominate; in colour, his face was of that uniform hue painters denominate as "warm," in fact, a rich sunset Claude Lorrainish tint, that seemed a compound, the result of high-seasoned meats, plethora, punch, and the tropics; in figure, he was like a huge pudding-bag, supported on two short little dumpy pillars, that from a sense of the superincumbent weight had wisely spread

themselves out below, giving to his lower man the appearance of a stunted letter A; his arms were most preposterously short, and for the convenience of locomotion he used them somewhat after the fashion of fins; as to his costume on the morning in question, it was a singularly dirty and patched dressing-gown of antique silk, fastened about the waste by a girdle, from which depended a scimitar on one side, and a meershaum on the other; a well-worn and not over clean-looking shawl was fastened in fashion of a turban round his head; a pair of yellow buskins with faded gold tassels decorated legs, which occasionally peeped from the folds of the *robe de chambre*, without any other covering.

Such was the outward man of him, who suddenly stopped short at the doorway, while he held the latch in his hand, and called out: —

“Burke! Tom Burke, don’t be violent; don’t be outrageous, you see I’m armed; I’d cut you down without mercy if you attempt to lift a finger; promise me this — do you hear me?”

That any one even unarmed could have conceived fear from such a poor, weak object as I was, seemed so utterly absurd, that I laughed outright; an emotion on my part that seemingly imparted but little confidence to my friend the captain, who retreated still closer to the door, and seemed ready for flight. The first use I could make of speech, however, was, to assure him that I was not only perfectly calm and sensible, but deeply grateful for kindness for which I knew not how, nor to whom I became indebted.

“Don’t roll your eyes there; don’t look so d—d treacherous,” said he; “keep down your hands; keep

them under the bed-clothes. I'd put a bullet through your skull if you stirred."

I again protested that any manifestation of quietness he asked for I would immediately comply with, and begged him to sit down beside me and tell me where I was, and how I had come hither. Having established an outwork of a table and two chairs between us, and cautiously having left the door a-jar, to secure his retreat, he drew the scimitar and placed it before him, his eyes being fixed on me the entire time.

"Well," said he, as he assumed a seat, and leaned his arm on the table, "so you are quiet at last. Lord! what a frightful lunatic you were. Nobody would approach your bed but me. The stoutest keeper of Swift's hospital fled from the spot, while I said, leave him to me. The human eye is your true agent to humble the pride of maniacal frenzy."

With these words he fixed on me a look such as the chief murderer in a melo-drama assumes, at the moment he proceeds to immolate a whole family.

"You infernal young villain, how I subdued you — how you quailed before me."

There was something so ludicrous in the contrast of this bravery with his actual terror, that again I burst out a laughing, upon which he sprang up, and brandishing his sabre, vowed vengeance on me if I stirred. After a considerable time spent thus, I at last succeeded in impressing him with the fact, that if I had all the will in the world to tear him in pieces, my strength would not suffice to carry me to the door. An assurance which, however sorrowfully made by me, I perceived to afford him the most unmixed satisfaction.

"That's right, quite right," said he, "and mad should he be indeed who would measure strength with me. The red men of Tuscarora always called me the great buffalo. I used to carry a bark canoe with my squaw and nine little black devils under one arm, so as to leave the other free for my tomahawk. 'He, how, he,' that's the war step."

Here he stooped down to his knees, and then sprang up again, with a yell that actually made me start, and brought a new actor on the scene in the person of Anna Maria, whose name I had so frequently heard the night before.

"What is the matter?" said the lady, a short squab-like woman, of nearly the captain's age, but none of his personal attractions. "We can't have him screaming all day in that fashion."

"It isn't him, it was I was performing the war dance. Come now let down your hair and be a squaw — do. What trouble is it? and bring in Saladin; we'll get up a combat scene; devilish fine thought that!"

The indignant look of the lady in reply to this modest proposal again overpowered me, and I sank back in my bed exhausted with laughter. An emotion which I was forced to subdue as well as I might on beholding the angry countenance with which the lady regarded me.

"I say, Burke," cried the captain, "let me present you to my sister, Miss Anna Maria Bubbleton."

A very dry recognition on Miss Anna Maria's part replied to the effort I made to salute her, and as she turned on her heel, she said to her brother, "Breakfast's ready," and left the room.

Bubbleton jumped up at this, rubbed his mouth pleasantly with his hand, smacked his lips, and then dropping his voice to a whisper, muttered —

“Excuse me, Tom, but if I have a weakness it is for yarmouth bloaters, and anchovy toast, milk chocolate, marmalade, hot rolls, and reindeer tongue, with a very small glass of pure white brandy, as a qualifier.” So saying, he whisked about and made his exit.

While my host was thus occupied I was visited by the regimental surgeon, who informed me that my illness had now been of some weeks’ duration: severe brain fever, with various attending evils, and a broken arm, being the happy results of my evening’s adventure at the parliament-house.

“Bubbleton’s an old friend of yours,” continued the doctor; and then, without giving me time to reply, added, “capital fellow, no better; a little given to the miraculous — eh! but nothing worse.”

“Why he does indeed seem to have a strong vein for fiction,” said I, half timidly.

“Bless your heart, he never ceases; his world is an ideal thing, full of impossible people and events, where he has lived at least some centuries, enjoying the intimacies of princes, statesmen, poets, and warriors; he has, in his own estimation, unlimited wealth and unbounded resources, the want of which he is never convinced of till pressed for five shillings to buy his dinner.”

“And his sister,” said I, “what of her?”

“Just as strange a character in the opposite direction. She is as matter-of-fact as he is imaginative. To all his flights she as resolutely enters a dissentient; and he never inflates his balloon of miracles without her

stepping forward to punch a hole in it. But here they come."

"I say, Pepper, how goes your patient? Spare no pains, old fellow — no expense; only get him round. I've left a check for you for five hundred in the next room. This is no regimental case — come, come, it's *my* way, and I insist upon it."

Pepper bowed with an air of the deepest gratitude, and actually looked so overpowered by the liberality, that I began to suspect there might be less truth in his account of Bubbleton than I thought a few minutes before.

"All insanity has left him — that's pleasant. I say, Tom, you must have had glorious thoughts, eh! When you were mad, did you ever think you were an anaconda bolting a goat, or the Eddystone lighthouse when the foundation began to shift?"

"No, never."

"How odd! I remember being once thrown on my head off a drag. I was breaking in a pair of young unicorns for the queen of —"

"No," said Anna Maria, in a voice of thunder, holding up her finger, at the same moment, in token of reproof.

The captain became mute on the instant, and the very word he was about to utter stuck in his throat, and he stood with his mouth open, like one in enchantment.

"You said a little weak tea, I think," said Miss Bubbleton, turning towards the doctor.

"Yes, and some dry toast, if he liked it: and, in a day or two, a half glass of wine and water."

"Some of that tokay old Pepi Esterhazy sent us —"

"No," said the lady again, in the same tone of menace.

"And, perhaps, after a week, the open air and a little exercise in a carriage."

"The barouche and the four ponies," interrupted Bubbleton.

"No," repeated Miss Anna Maria, but in such a voice of imperious meaning, that the poor captain actually fell back, and only muttered to himself —

"What was the use of wealth, if one couldn't contribute to the enjoyment of their friends?"

"There's the drum for parade," cried the doctor; "you'll be late, and so shall I."

They both bustled out of the room together, while Miss Anna Maria, taking her work out of a small bag she carried on her arm, drew a chair to the window, and sat down, having quietly intimated to me that, as conversation was deemed injurious to me, I must not speak one syllable.

CHAPTER XIII.

An unlooked-for visitor.

ALL my endeavours to ascertain the steps by which I came to occupy my present abode were fruitless, inasmuch as Captain Bubbleton contrived to surround his explanation with such a mist of doubtful, if not impossible circumstances, that I gave up the effort in despair, and was obliged to sit down satisfied with the naked fact, that it was by some soldiers of his company I was captured, and by them brought to the guard-house. Strangely enough, too, I found that in his self-mystification, the worthy captain had invested me with all the honours of a staunch loyalist who had

earned his cracked skull in defence of the soldiery against the mob; and this prevailing impression gave such a tone to his narrative, that he not only set to work to trace back a whole generation of Burkes famed for their attachment to the House of Hanover, but also took a peep into the probable future, where he saw me covered with rewards for my heroism and gallantry.

Young as I was, I hesitated long how far I dare trust him with the real state of the case. I felt that in so doing I should either expose him to the self-reproach of having harboured one he would deem a rebel — or, by withdrawing from me his protection, give him, perhaps, greater pain by compelling him to such an ungracious act. Yet, how could I receive attention and kindness under these false colours? This was a puzzling and difficult thing to resolve; and a hundred times a day I wished I had never been rescued by him, but taken my chance of the worst fortune had in store for me.

While, therefore, my strength grew with every day, these thoughts harassed and depressed me. The continual conflict in my mind deprived me of all ease; and scarcely a morning broke, in which I had not decided on avowing my real position and my true sentiments; and still, when the moment came, the flighty uncertainty of Bubbleton's manner — his caprice and indiscretion — all frightened me, and I was silent. I hoped, too, that some questioning on his part might give me a fitting opportunity for such a disclosure; but here again I was deceived. The jolly captain was far too busy inventing his own history of me, to think of asking for mine; and I found out from the surgeon

of the regiment, that according to the statement made at the mess-table, I was an only son, possessed of immense estates — somewhat encumbered, to be sure, (among other debts, a large jointure to my mother) — that I had come up to town to consult the attorney-general about the succession to a title long in abeyance in my family, and was going down to the house in Lord Castlereagh's carriage, when, fired by the ruffianism of the mob, I sprang out, and struck one of the ringleaders, &c. &c.

How this visionary history had its origin, or whether it had any, save in the wandering fancies of his brain, I knew not; but either by frequent repetition of it, or by the strong hold a favourite notion sometimes will take of a weak intellect, he so far believed it true, that he wrote more than one letter to Lord Castlereagh, to assure him that I was rapidly recovering, and would be delighted to receive him — which, whether from a knowledge of the captain's character, or his indifference as to my fate, the secretary certainly never took any notice of whatever.

Bubbleton had too much experience of similar instances of neglect to be either afflicted or offended at this silence; on the contrary, he satisfied his mind by an excuse of his own inventing, and went about saying — “I think we 'll have Castlereagh down to-day to see Burke,” until it became a cant on parade, and a jest at mess.

Meanwhile, his active mind was not lying dormant. Indignant that no inquiries had been made after me, and astonished that no *aide-de-camp* — not even a liveried menial of the viceroy's household — had come down to receive the daily bulletin of my health; and

somewhat piqued, perhaps, that his own important services regarding me remained unacknowledged, he set about springing a mine for himself which very nearly became my ruin.

After about ten days spent by me in this state of painful vacillation, my mind vibrating between two opposite courses, and seeing arguments for either, both in the matter-of-fact shortness of Miss Bubbleton's not over-courteous manner, and the splendidly-liberal and vast conceptions of her brother, I went to my bed one night, resolved that on the very next morning I would hesitate no longer; and as my strength would now permit of my being able to walk unassisted, I would explain freely to Bubbleton every circumstance of my life, and take my leave of him, to wander, I knew not where. This decision at length being come to, I slept more soundly than I had done for many nights, nor awoke until the loud step and the louder voice of the captain aroused me from my slumbers.

"Eh, Tom — a good night, my lad? How soundly you sleep! Just like the Lachigong Indians: they go to bed after the hunting season, and never wake till the bears come in next fall. I had the knack myself once, but then I always took six or seven dozen of strong Burton ale first — and that, they said, wasn't quite fair; but for a white man, I'd back myself for a thousand to-morrow. But what's this I have to tell you? Something or other was in my head for you. Oh, I have it! I say, Tom, old fellow, I think I have touched them up to some purpose. They didn't expect it — no, hang it! they little knew what was in store for them. They weren't quite prepared for it. By Jove, that they weren't!"

"Who are they?" said I, sitting up in my bed, and somewhat curious to hear something of these astonished individuals.

"The government, my lad! — the castle — the private sec. — the major — the treasury — the board of green cloth — the — what d'ye call them? — the privy council."

"Why, what has happened them?"

"I'll show you what's happened. Lie down again and compose yourself. He won't be here before twelve o'clock; though, by-the-by, I promised on my honour not to say a word about his coming. But it's over now."

"Who is it?" said I, eagerly.

"Oh, I can't tell now. You'll see him very soon, and right glad he'll be to see you — so he says. But here they are — here's the whole affair." So saying, he covered the bed with a mass of newspapers, and blotted, ill-written manuscripts, among which he commenced a vigorous search at once.

"Here it is. I've found it out. Listen to this: — '*The Press*, Friday, August 10. — The magnificent ourang-outang that Captain Bubbleton is about to present to the lady lieutenant —' No; that isn't it. It must be in Faulkner. Ay, here we have it: — 'In Captain Bubbleton's forthcoming volume, with which we have been favoured with a private perusal, a very singular account is given of the gigantic mouse found in Candia, which grows to the size of a common mastiff —' No; that's not it. You've heard of that, Tom, though; haven't you?"

"Never," said I, trying to repress a smile.

"I'm amazed at that, Never heard of my curious

speculations about the Candian mouse! The fellow has a voice like a human being — you 'd hear him crying in the woods, and you 'd swear it was a child. I 've a notion that the Greeks took their word 'mousikos' from this fellow; but that's not what I'm looking for. No, but here it is. This is squib No. 1: — 'Tuesday morning. — We are at length enabled to state that the young gentleman who took such a prominent part in defending the military against the savage and murderous attack of the mob in the late riot in College-green, is now out of danger; being removed to Captain Bubbleton's quarters, in George's-street barracks, he was immediately trepanned —' Eh? trepanned! No; you weren't trepanned; but Pepper said you might have been though, and he 'd just as soon do it, as not; — so I put in trepanned. — 'The piaster was fortunately not cut through.' That you don't understand; but no matter — hem, hem — 'Congestion of —' hem, hem — 'In our next, we hope to give a still more favourable report.' Then here's the next: — 'To the *aide-de-camp* sent to inquire after the "hero of College Green," the answer this morning was — "Better — able to sit up."' Well, here we go. No. 3: — 'His excellency mentioned this morning at the privy council the satisfaction he felt at being able to announce that Mr. * * * * (from motives of delicacy we omit the name) is now permitted to take some barley-gruel, with a spoonful of old Madeira. The Bishop of Ferns and Sir Boyle Roach both left their cards yesterday at the barracks.' I waited a day or two after this; but — would you believe it? — no notice was taken — not even the opposition papers said a word, except some insolent

rascal in *The Press* asks — ‘Can you tell your readers are we to have any thing more from Captain Bubbleton?’ So then I resolved to come out in force, and here you see the result — ‘Friday, 20th — It is now our gratifying task to announce the complete restoration of the young gentleman whose case has, for some weeks past, been the engrossing topic of conversation of all ranks and classes, from the table of the viceroy to the humble denizen of Mud Island. Mr. Burke is only son and heir to the late Matthew Burke, of Cremore, county of Galway. His family have been long distinguished for their steady uncompromising loyalty; nor is the hereditary glory of their house likely to suffer in the person of the illustrious youth, who we learn is now to be raised to the baronetcy, under the title of Sir Thomas Bubbleton Burke, the second name assumed to commemorate the services of Captain Bubbleton, whose —’ Of course I dilated a little here to round the paragraph. Well, this did it. Here was the shell that exploded the magazine; for early this morning I received a polite note from the Castle; I won’t tell you the writer though — I like a good bit of surprise; and, egad, now I think on’t, I won’t say any thing more about the letter either, only that we’re in luck, my lad, as you’ll soon acknowledge. What’s the hour now? Ah! a quarter to twelve; but wait, I think I hear him in the next room; jump up, and dress as fast as you can, while I do the honours.”

With this the captain bustled out of the room, and although he banged the door after him, I could hear his voice in the act of welcoming some new arrival.

In spite of the sea of nonsense and absurdity through which I had waded in the last half hour, the

communication he had made me excited my curiosity to the utmost, and in some respect rendered me uneasy. It was no part whatever of my object to afford any clue to Basset by which he might trace me, and although much of the fear I had formerly entertained of that dreaded personage had evaporated with increased knowledge of the world, yet old instincts preserved their influence over me, and I felt as though Tony Basset would be a name of terror to me for my life long. It was quite clear, however, that the application from the Castle to which he alluded, could have no reference to the honest attorney; and with this comforting reflection, which I confess came somewhat late, I finished my dressing, and prepared to leave my room.

“Oh! here he comes,” cried Bubbleton, as he flung open my door, and announced my approach. “Come along, Tom, and let us see if your face will let you be recognised.”

I scarcely had crossed the threshold when I started back with affright, and, had it not been for the wall against which I leaned, must have fallen. The stranger whose visit was to afford me so much of pleasure was no other than Major Barton: there he stood, his arm leaning on the chimney-piece, the same cool malicious smile playing about the angles of his mouth, which I noticed the first day I saw him in the glen. His sharp eyes shot on me one quick searching glance, and then turned to the door, from which again they were directed to me, as if some passing thought had moved them.

Bubbleton was the first to speak, for not noticing either the agitation I was under, or the stern expression of Barton's features, he ran on —

"Eh, major! that's your friend — isn't it? changed a bit I suppose, a little blanched, but in a good cause you know, that's the thing. Come, Tom, you don't forget your old friend, Major — what's the name?"

"Barton," repeated the other drily.

"Yes, Major Barton; he's come from his excellency. I knew that last paragraph would do it — eh, major?"

"You were quite right, Sir," said Barton slowly and distinctly, "that paragraph did do it; and very fortunate you may esteem yourself, if it will not do *you* also."

"Eh! what! how *me*? what d'you mean?"

"How long, may I beg to ask," continued Barton in the same quiet tone of voice, "have you known this young gentleman?"

"Burke! Tom Burke! bless your heart, since the height of that fender. His father and mine were school-fellows. I'm not sure he was'nt my godfather, or at least one of them — I had four." Here the captain began counting on his fingers. "There was the Moulah, one; the Cham, two —"

"I beg your pardon for the interruption," said Barton, with affected politeness: "how long has he occupied these quarters? that fact may possibly not be too antiquated for your memory."

"How long?" said Bubbleton reflectingly. "Let me see — here we are, in August —"

"Three weeks, on Tuesday last," said I, interfering to prevent any further drain on so lavish an imagination.

"Then you came here on the day of the riots?" said Barton.

"On that evening," was my reply.

“On that evening — just so: before or after, may I ask?”

“I shall answer no farther questions,” said I resolutely: “if you have any charge against me, it is for you to prove it.”

“Charge against you!” said Bubbleton laughing. “Bless your heart; boy, don’t mistake him: they’ve sent him down to compliment you. Lord Castlereagh mentions in his note — where the devil did I throw that note?”

“It’s of no consequence, captain,” said Barton drily: “his lordship usually entrusts the management of these matters to me. May I learn is this young gentleman known in your regiment? has he been at your mess?”

“Tom Burke known among us! Why, man, he’s called nothing but ‘Burke of ours’ — he’s one of ourselves — not gazetted you know, but all the same in fact. We couldn’t get on without him; he’s like the mess-plate, or the orderly-book, or the regimental snuff-box.”

“I’m sincerely sorry, Sir,” rejoined Barton slowly, “to rob you and the gallant forty-fifth of one upon whom you place such just value. But ‘Burke of ours’ must consent to be Burke of mine at present.”

“To be sure, my dear major — of course, any thing convivial — nothing like good fellowship; we’ll lend him to you for to-day — one day, mark me, we can’t spare him longer — and now I think of it, don’t press him with his wine, he’s been poorly of late.”

“Have no fears on that score,” said Barton, laughing outright: “our habits of life, in his circumstances, are rigidly temperate.” Then turning to me,

he continued in an altered voice — “I need scarcely explain to *you*, Sir, the reason of my visit: when last we parted I did not anticipate that our next meeting would have been in a royal barrack; but you may thank your friend here for my knowledge of your abode —”

Bubbleton attempted to interpose here a panegyric on himself, but Barton went on —

“Here is an order of the privy council for your apprehension, and here —”

“Apprehension!” echoed the captain, in a voice of wonderment and terror.

“Here, Sir, is your committal to Newgate. I suppose you’ll not give me the trouble of using force; I have a carriage in waiting below, and request that we may lose no more time.”

“I’m ready, Sir,” said I, as stoutly as I was able.

“To Newgate!” repeated Bubbleton, as overcome with fright he sank back in a chair, and crossed his arms on his breast. “Poor fellow! poor fellow! perhaps they’ll bring it in manslaughter — eh? or was it a bank robbery?”

Not even the misery before me could prevent my smiling at the worthy captain’s rapidly-conceived narrative of me. I was in no merry mood, however, and turning to him grasped his hand.

“It may happen,” said I, “that we never meet again. I know not, indeed I hardly care, what is before me; but with all my heart I thank you for your kindness — farewell.”

“Farewell,” said he, half mechanically, as he grasped my hand in both of his, and the large tears rolled down his cheeks. “Poor fellow! all my fault — see it now.”

I hurried after Barton down stairs, a nervous choking in my throat nearly suffocating me. Just as I reached the door the carriage drew up, and a policeman let down the steps. Already my foot was on them, when Bubbleton was beside me —

“I’ll go with him, major, — you’ll permit me, won’t you?”

“Not at present, captain,” said Barton significantly; “it may happen that we shall want you one of these days — good-by.”

He pushed me forward as he spoke, and entered the carriage after me. I felt the pressure of poor Bubbleton’s hand as he pressed mine for the last time, and discovered he had slipped something into my palm at parting. I opened and found two guineas in gold, which the kind-hearted fellow had given me — perhaps they were his only ones in the world.

CHAPTER XIV.

The gaol.

FROM the moment the carriage-door closed upon us, Barton never addressed one word to me, but, leaning back, seemed only anxious to escape being recognised by the people, whose attention was drawn to the vehicle by seeing two mounted policemen ride at either side of it. We drove along the quays, and, crossing an old dilapidated bridge, traversed several obscure and mean-looking streets, through which numbers of persons were hurrying in the same direction we were going. At length we arrived at a large open space, thronged with people, whose dress and appearance bespoke them from the country. They were all conversing in a low murmuring tone, and looking up

from time to time towards a massive building of dark granite, which I had only to glance at to guess was Newgate. Our pace slackened to a walk as we entered the crowd; and while we moved slowly along, I was struck by the eager and excited faces I saw on every side. It could be no common occasion which impressed that vast multitude with the one character of painful anxiety I beheld. As they stood gazing with upturned faces at the frowning portals of the gaol, the deep solemn tolling of a bell rung out at the moment; and as its sad notes vibrated through the air, it seemed to strike with a mournful power on every heart in the crowd. In an instant, too, the windows of all the houses were thronged with eager faces; even the parapets were crowded, and while every sound was hushed, each eye was turned in one direction. I followed with my own whither the others were bent, and beheld above my head the dark frame-work of the "drop," covered with black cloth, above which a piece of rope swung, swayed backwards and forwards with the wind. The narrow door behind was closed, but it was clear that each second that stole by, was bringing some wretched criminal closer to his awful doom.

As we neared the entrance, the massive doors were opened on a signal from a policeman on the box of the carriage, and we drove inside the gloomy vestibule. It was only then, as the heavy door banged behind me, that my heart sank. Up to that moment a mingled sense of wrong, and a feeling of desperate courage had nerved me; but suddenly a cold chill ran through my veins, my knees smote each other, and fear, such as till then I never knew, crept over me.

The carriage-door was now opened, the steps lowered, and Barton descending first, addressed a few words to a person near him, whom he called Mr. Gregg.

It was one of those moments in life in which every passing look, every chance word, every stir, every gesture, are treasured up, and remembered ever after: and I recollect now, how, as I stepped from the carriage, a feeling of shame passed across me lest the by-standers should mark my fear, and what a relief I experienced on finding that my presence was unnoticed; and then the instant after that very same neglect, that cold, cold indifference to me, smote as heavily on my spirits, and I looked on myself as one whose fate had no interest for any — in whose fortune none sympathized.

“Drive on,” cried a rough voice to the coachman, and the carriage moved through the narrow passage, in which some dozen of persons were now standing. The next moment a murmur of “they are coming,” was heard, and the solemn tones of a man’s voice chanting the last offices of the Romish church reached us, with the measured footfall of persons crossing the flagged court-yard. In the backward movement now made by those around me I was brought close to a small arched doorway, within which a flight of stone steps ascended in a spiral direction, and towards this point I remarked that the persons who approached were tending. My eyes scarcely glanced on those who came first, but they rested with a fearful interest on the bare-headed priest, who, in all the trappings of his office, walked, book in hand, repeating with mournful impressiveness the litany for the dead. As he came nearer I could see that his eyes were dimmed

with tears, and his pale lips quivered with emotion, while his very cheek trembled with a convulsive agony. Not so he who followed. He was a young man, scarce four and twenty, dressed in loose white trowsers and shirt, but without coat, vest, or cravat; his head bare, and displaying a broad forehead, across which some straggling hairs of light brown were blown by the wind. His eye was bright and flashing, and in the centre of his pale cheek a small crimson spot glowed with a hectic colouring. His step was firm, and as he planted it upon the ground, a kind of elasticity seemed to mark his foot-fall. He endeavoured to repeat after the priest the words as they fell from him: but as he looked wildly around, it was clear his mind was straying from the subject which his lips expressed, and that thoughts far different were passing within him. Suddenly his eyes fell upon the major, who stood close to where I was. The man started back, and for a second even that small spot of crimson left his cheek, which became nearly livid in its palor. A ghastly smile, that showed his white teeth from side to side, crossed his features, and with a voice of terrible earnestness, he said —

“’Tis easy for you to look calm, Sir, at your mornin’s work, and I hope you’re plazed at it.” Then frowning fearfully as his face grew purple, he added, “But by the eternal — you ’d not look that way av we two stood by ourselves on the side of Slieb-mish, and nothing but our own four arms between us.”

The horrible expression of vengeance that lit up his savage face at these words, seemed to awe even the callous and stern nature of Barton himself. All his efforts to seem calm and at ease were for the mo-

ment unavailing, and he shrunk from the proud and flashing eye of the felon, as though he were the guilty one in the presence of his accuser.

Another stroke of the heavy bell rung out; the prisoner started, and, turning round his head, seemed to peer anxiously through the crowd behind him, when his eyes fell upon the figure of a man apparently a year or two younger than himself, and whose features, even in their livid colouring, bore a striking resemblance to his own.

"Come, Patsy," cried he, "come along with us." Then turning to the gaoler, while his face assumed a smile, and his voice a tone of winning softness, he added — "It is my brother, Sir, he is come up nigh eighty miles to see me, and I hope you'll let him come upon the drop."

There was something in the quiet earnestness of his manner in such a moment, that thrilled upon the heart more painfully than even the violent outbreak of his passion; and when I saw the two brothers hand in hand, march step by step along, and then disappear in the winding of the dark stair, a sick, cold feeling came over me; and even the loud shout that rent the air from the assembled thousands without, scarce roused me from my stupor.

"Come, Sir," cried a man, who in the dress of an official had been for some minutes carefully reading over the document of my committal — "after me, if you please."

I followed him across the court-yard in the direction of a small building which stood isolated and apart from the rest, when suddenly he stopped, and carefully examining the paper in his hand, he said —

“Wait a moment, I’ll join you presently.”

With these words he hurried back towards the gate, where Barton still stood with two or three others. What passed between them I could not hear, but I could distinctly mark that Barton’s manner was more abrupt and imperious than ever; and that while the gaoler — for such he was — expressed his scruples of one kind or another, the major would not hear him with patience, but turning his back upon him, called out loud enough to be heard even where I stood —

“I tell you, I don’t care — regular or irregular — if *you* refuse to take him in charge, on your own head be it. We have come to a pretty pass, Pollock,” said he, turning to a person beside him, “when there is more sympathy for a rebel in his majesty’s gaol, than respect for a government officer.”

“I’ll do it, Sir — I’ll do it,” cried the gaoler; saying which he motioned me to follow, while he muttered between his teeth — “there must come an end to this, one day or other.”

With that he unlocked a strongly barred gate, and led me along a narrow passage, at the extremity of which he opened a door into a small and rather comfortably furnished room.

“Here, Sir,” said he, “you’ll be better than where I have my orders to put you, and, in any case, I trust that our acquaintance will be but a short one.”

These were the first words of kindness I had heard for some time past. I turned to thank the speaker, but already the door had closed, and he was gone.

The quickly succeeding incidents of my life — the dark destiny that seemed to track me — had given a reflective character to my mind while I was yet a boy.

The troubles and cares of life, that in manhood serve only to mould and fashion character, to call forth efforts of endurance, of courage, or ability, come upon us in early years with far different effect and far different teaching. Every lesson of deceit and duplicity is a direct shock to some preconceived notion of faith and honour; every punishment, whose severity in after years we had forgotten in its justice, has, to the eyes of youth, a character of vindictive cruelty. Looking only to effects, and never to causes, our views of life are one-sided and imperfect: the better parts of our nature will as often mislead us by false sympathy, as will the worse ones by their pernicious tendency.

From the hour I quitted my father's house to the present, I had seen nothing but what to me appeared the sufferings of a poor, defenceless people, at the hands of wanton tyranny and outrage. I had seen the peasant's cabin burned, because it had been a shelter to an outcast. I had heard the loud and drunken denunciations of a ruffian soldiery against those who professed no other object, who acknowledged no other wish than liberty and equality; and in my heart I vowed a rooted hate to the enemies of my country — a vow that lost nothing of its bitterness, because it was made within the walls of a prison.

In reflections like these my evening passed on, and with it the greater part of the night also. My mind was too much excited to permit me to sleep, and I longed for day-break with that craving impatience which sick men feel, who count the long hours of darkness, and think the morning must bring relief. It came at last, and the heavy, clanking sounds of massive doors opening and shutting — the mournful echoes that told

of captivity and durance — sighed along the corridors, and then all was still.

There is a time in reverie when silence seems not to encourage thought, but rather like some lowering cloud to hang over and spread a gloomy insensibility around us. Long watching and much thinking had brought me now to this, and I sat looking upon the faint streak of sunlight that streamed through the barred window, and speculating within myself when it would fall upon the hearth. Suddenly I heard the sound of footsteps in the corridor, my door was opened, and the gaoler entered, followed by a man carrying my breakfast.

“Come, Sir,” said the former, “I hope you have got an appetite for our prison fare. Lose no time, for there is a carriage in waiting to bring you to the Castle, and the major himself is without.”

“I am ready this moment,” said I, starting up, and taking my hat, and notwithstanding every entreaty to eat, made with kindness and good-nature, I refused every thing, and followed him out into the court-yard, where Barton was pacing up and down, impatiently awaiting our coming.

CHAPTER XV.

The castle.

SCARCELY had the carriage driven from the gloomy portals of the gaol, and entered one of the long, straggling streets that led towards the river, when I noticed a singular-looking figure who ran alongside, and kept up with us as we went. A true type of the raggedness of old Dublin, his clothes fluttered behind him like ribbons; even from his hat, his long red hair

straggled and streamed, while his nether garments displayed a patchwork no tartan could vie with; his legs were bare, save where a single top-boot defended one of them, the other was naked to the foot, clad in an old morocco slipper, which he kicked up and caught again as he went with surprising dexterity, accompanying the feat with a wild yell which might have shamed a war-whoop; he carried a bundle of printed papers over one arm, and flourished one of them in his right hand, vociferating something all the while with uncommon energy. Scarcely had the carriage drawn up at the door of an old-fashioned brick building when he was beside it.

"How are ye, major? How is every bit of you, Sir? Are ye taking them this mornin'? — 't is yourself knows how! Buy a ha'porth, Sir."

"What have you got to-day, Toby?" said the major, with a greater degree of complacency in his manner than I had ever noticed before.

"An illigant new song about Buck Whaley; or maybe you'd like Beresford's jig, or the humours of Malbro' Green."

"Why, man, they're old these three weeks."

"True for ye, major: begorra, there's no chating you at all, at all. Well, maybe you'll have this — Here's the bloody and cruel outrage com-mittel by the yeomen on the body of a dacent and respectable young man, by the name of Darby M'Keown, with the full and true account of how he was inhumanly stabbed and murdered on the 8th day of July —"

"Ay, give me that; I hope they've done for that scoundrel; I have been on his track three years."

The fellow drew near, and, as he handed the paper

to the major, contrived to approach close to where I stood. "Buy one, master," said he, and as he spoke he turned completely round, so as only to be observed by myself, and as suddenly the whole expression of his vacant features changed like magic, and I saw before me the well-known face of Darby himself.

"Did you get an answer to that for me, Toby?" said the major.

"Yes, Sir; here it is," and with that he pulled off his tattered hat, and withdrew a letter which lay concealed within the lining. 'Tis sixpence you ought to be afther givin' me this mornin', major," continued he, in an insinuating tone of voice; "the devil a less than twenty-one mile it is out of this, not to spake of the danger I run, and the boys out on every side o' me."

"And what's the news up the country, Toby?" asked the major, as he broke the seal of the letter.

"'T is talking of a risin' they do be still, Sir — av the praties was in, glory be to God, they say it 'll be a great sayson."

"For which, Toby — the cups or the croppies?"

"Yes, Sir," replied Toby, with a most provoking look of idiotcy. "And you won't buy Darby, Sir?" rejoined he, flourishing the printed placard. "No matter; here's the whole, full, thrue, and particular account," and so he turned the angle of the building, and I could hear his voice mingling with the street noises as he wended his way down Dame-street. The major looked after him, and smiled, and brief as was that smile, I saw in it how thoroughly he was duped.

"Come, Sir, follow me, if you please," said he, addressing me.

I mounted a flight of old and neglected stairs, and

entered an ante-room, where, having waited for a few seconds, the major whispered an order to the porter, and passed on to the inner room, leaving me behind.

As Major Barton passed out by one door, the porter turned the key in the other, and, placing it in his pocket, drew his chair to the window and resumed the newspaper he was reading when we entered. How long I waited I cannot say. My thoughts, though sad ones, chased each other rapidly, and I felt not the time as it passed. Suddenly the door opened, and I heard my name called. I drew a deep breath, like one who felt his fate was in the balance, and entered.

The room, which was plainly furnished, seemed to serve as an office. The green-covered table that stood in the middle was littered with letters and papers, among which a large heavy-browed, dark-featured man was searching busily as I came in. Behind, and partly beside him, stood Barton, in an attitude of respectful attention, while, with his hand to the fire, was a third person, whose age might have been from thirty-five to forty. His dress was in the perfection of the *mode*, his top-boots reaching down to the middle of his leg — his blue coat, of the lightest shade of sky blue, was lined with white silk, and two watch chains hung down beneath his buff waistcoat, in the *acmé* of the then fashion. His features were frank and handsome, and, saving a dash of puppyism that gave a character of weakness to the expression, I should deem him a manly, fine-looking fellow.

“So this is your ‘Robespierre!’ major — is it?” cried he, bursting into a laugh, as I appeared.

Barton approached nearer to him, and muttered

something in a low, mumbling tone, to which the other seemed to pay little, if any, attention.

"You are here, Sir," said the dark-featured man at the table, holding in his hand a paper as he spoke — "you are here, under a warrant of the privy council, charging you with holding intercourse with that rebellious and ill-fated faction, who seek to disturb the peace and welfare of this country — disseminating dangerous and wicked doctrines, and being in alliance with France — with France — what's that word, Barton — to —"

"In two words, young gentleman," said the young man at the fire, "you are charged with keeping very bad company — learning exceedingly unprofitable notions, and incurring very considerable present risk. Now, I am not disposed to think that, at your age, and with your respectable connections, either the cause or its associates, can have taken a very strong hold of your mind. I am sure that you must have received your impressions, such as they are, from artful and designing persons, who had only their own ends in view when involving you in their plots. If I am justified in this opinion, and if you will pledge me your honour —"

"I say, Cooke, you can't do this. The warrant sets forth —"

"Well, well, we'll admit him to bail."

"It is notailable, right honourable," said Barton, addressing the large man at the table.

"Phelan," said the younger man, turning away in pique, "we really have matters of more importance than this boy's case to look after."

"Boy as he is, Sir," said Barton, obsequiously,

"he was in the full confidence of that notorious French captain for whose capture you offered a reward of one thousand pounds."

"You like to run your fox to earth, Barton," replied the undersecretary calmly, for it was he who spoke.

"An alliance with France," continued the dark man, reading from the paper, over which he continued to pore ever since, "for the propagation — ay, that's it — the propagation of democratic —"

"Come, come, Browne, never mind the warrant; if he can find bail — say five hundred pounds — for his future appearance, we shall be satisfied."

Browne, who never took his eyes from the paper, and seemed totally insensible to every thing but the current of his own thoughts, now looked up, and, fixing his dark and beetling look upon me, uttered in a deep, low tone —

"You see, Sir, the imminent danger of your present position, and at the same time the merciful leniency which has always characterized his majesty's government — ahem! If, therefore, you will plead guilty to any transportable felony, the grand jury will find true bills —"

"You mistake, Browne," said Cooke, endeavouring with his handkerchief to repress a burst of laughter, "we are going to take his bail."

"Bail!" said the other, in a voice, and with a look of amazement, absolutely comic.

Up to this moment I had not broken silence, but I was unable to remain longer so.

"I am quite ready, Sir," said I, resolutely, "to stand my trial for any thing laid to my charge. I am

neither ashamed of the opinions I profess, nor afraid of the dangers they involve."

"You hear him, Sir, you hear him," said Barton, triumphantly, turning toward the secretary, who bit his lip in disappointment, and frowned on me with a mingled expression of anger and warning. — "Let him only proceed, and you'll be quite satisfied, on his own showing, that he cannot be admitted to bail."

"Bail," echoed the right honourable, whose faculties seemed to have stuck fast in the mud of thought, and were totally unable to extricate themselves.

At the same moment, a gentle tap was heard at the door, and the porter entered with a card, which he delivered to the secretary.

"Let him wait," was the brief reply, as he threw his eyes over it. "Captain Bubbleton," muttered he, between his teeth. "Don't know him."

I started at the name, and felt my cheek flush; he saw it at once.

"You know this gentleman, then?" said he mildly.

"Yes; to his humanity I am indebted for my life."

"I think I shall be able to show, Sir," said Barton, interposing, "that through this Burke's instrumentality a very deep scheme of disaffection is at this moment in operation among the troops in garrison. It was in the barrack at George's-street where I apprehended him."

"You may withdraw, Sir," said the secretary, turning towards me. "Let Captain Bubbleton come in."

As I left the room, the burly captain entered; but so flurried and excited was he, that he never perceived me, as we passed each other.

I had not been many minutes in the outer room

when a loud laugh attracted me, in which I could distinctly recognise the merry cadence of my friend Bubbleton, and shortly after the door was opened, and I was desired to enter.

"You distinctly understand, then, Captain Bubbleton," said Mr. Cooke, "that in accepting the bail in this case, I am assuming a responsibility which may involve me in trouble?"

"I have no doubt of it," muttered Barton, between his teeth.

"We shall require two sureties of five hundred pounds each."

"Take the whole myself, by Jove," broke in Bubbleton, with a flourish of his hand. — "In for a penny — eh, Tom?"

"You can't do that, Sir," interposed Barton.

The secretary nodded an assent, and for a moment or two, Bubbleton looked nonplussed.

"You'll of course have little difficulty as to a co-surety," continued Barton, with a grin. "Burke 'of ours' is sufficiently popular in the forty-fifth to make it an easy matter."

"True," cried Bubbleton, "quite true; but in a thing of this kind, every fellow will be so deuced anxious to come forward — a kind of military feeling you know."

"I understand it perfectly," said Cooke, with a polite bow; "although a civilian, I think I can estimate the *'esprit du corps'* you speak of."

"Nothing like it, nothing like it, by Jove. I'll just tell you a story — a little anecdote in point. When we were in the Neelgharries, there was a tiger de-

vilish fond of one of ours — someway or other, Forbes, that was his name. —”

“The tiger’s?”

“No! the captain’s. Forbes had a devilish insinuating way with him — women always liked him — and this tiger used to come in after mess and walk round to where he was sitting, and Forbes used to give him his dinner, just as you might a dog —”

The Castle clock struck three just at this moment; the secretary started up —

“My dear captain,” cried he, putting his hand on Bubbleton’s arm, “I never was so sorry in my life; but I must hurry away to the privy council. I shall be here, however, at four; and if you will meet me at that time with the other security, we can arrange this little matter at once.” So saying, he seized his hat, bowed politely round the room, and left us.

“Come along, Tom,” cried Bubbleton, taking me by the arm; “devilish good fellow, that; knew I’d tickle him with the tiger; nothing to what I could have told him, however, if he had waited.”

“I beg your pardon, Sir,” said Barton, interposing between us and the door, “Mr. Burke is in custody until the formality at least of a bail be gone through.”

“So he is,” said Bubbleton, “I forgot all about it. So good-by, Tom, for half an hour; I’ll not be longer, depend on it.”

With this he shook me warmly by the hand, hustled out of the room, and hurried down stairs, humming a tune as he went, apparently in capital spirits, while I knew from his manner that the bail he was in search of, had about as much existence as the tiger in the Neelgharries.

"You can wait in this room, Sir," said Barton, opening the door of a small apartment which had no other exit save through this office. I sat down in silence and in sorrow of heart, to speculate on, as well as I was able, the consequences of my misfortune. I knew enough of Bubbleton to be certain that all chance of assistance in that quarter was out of the question — the only source he could draw upon being his invention — the only wealth he possessed, the riches of his imagination — which had, however, this advantage over any other species of property I ever heard of — the more he squandered it, the more affluent did he become. Time wore on; the clock struck four; and yet no appearance of Bubbleton. Another hour rolled by — no one came near me, and at length, from the perfect stillness without, I believed they had forgotten me.

CHAPTER XVI.

The bail.

SIX o'clock, seven, and even eight struck, and yet no one came. The monotonous tread of the sentry on guard at the Castle-gate, and the occasional challenge to some passing stranger, were the only sounds I heard above the distant hum of the city, which grew fainter gradually as evening fell. At last I heard the sound of a key moving in a lock, the bang of a door, and then came the noise of many voices, as the footsteps mounted the stairs, amid which Bubbleton's was pre-eminently loud. The party entered the room next to where I sat, and from the tones, I could collect that Major Barton and Mr. Cooke were of the number. Another there was, too, whose voice, though not ab-

solutely new or strange to my ears, I could not possibly charge my memory where I had heard it before.

While I was thus musing, the door opened noiselessly, and Bubbleton entering without a word, closed it behind him, and approached me on tip-toe.

"All right, my boy; they're doing the needful outside; ready in ten minutes; never was such a piece of fortune; found out a glorious fellow; heard of him from Hicks, the money-lender; he'll go security to any amount; knows your family well; knew your father, grandfather I believe; delighted to meet you; says he'd rather see you than fifty pounds!"

"Who is he, for heaven's sake?" said I impatiently; for it was a new thing to me to receive any thing like kindness on the score of my father's memory.

"Eh! who is he? He's a kind of a bill-broking, mortgaging, bail-giving, devilish good sort of fellow. I've a notion he'd do a bit of something at three months."

"But his name; what's he called?"

"His name is — let me see; his name is — but who cares for his name; he can write it I suppose, and on a stamp, my boy — that's the mark. Bless your heart, I only spoil a stamp when I put my autograph across it — it would be worth prime cost till then. — What a glorious thing is youth — unfledged, unblemished youth — to possess a name new to the Jews — a reputation against which no one has 'protested.' Tom Burke, my boy, I envy you. Now, when I write George Frederick Augustus Bubbleton on any bill, warrant, or quittance, straight way there's a grin around the circle — a kind of a d — d im-

pertinent sort of a half-civil smile, as though to say '*nulla bona*,' payable nowhere; but hold! that was a tap at the door — oh, they want us."

So saying, the captain opened the door and introduced me.

"I say, Tom," cried he, "come here, and thank our kind friend, Mr. — Mr. —"

"Mr. Basset," said I, starting back, as my eyes beheld the pale, sarcastic features of the worthy attorney, who stood at the table, conversing in a low tone with the under-secretary.

"Eh! what's the matter?" whispered Bubbleton, as he saw my colour come and go, and perceived that I leaned on a chair for support. "What the devil's wrong now?"

"You've betrayed me to my greatest enemy," said I, in a low, distinct voice.

"Eh! what! — why you seem to have nothing but foes in the world. Confound it, that's always my luck — my infernal good-nature is everlastingly making a wrong plunge."

"In that case, if I understand the matter aright, the bail is unnecessary," said Mr. Cooke, addressing Basset, who never turned his head to the part of the room where we stood.

"No, Sir; it is not necessary. While the law assists me to resume my guardianship of this young gentleman, I am answerable for his appearance."

"The indentures are quite correct," said Barton, as he laid the papers on the table, "as I believe Mr. Basset's statement to be also."

"No bail necessary," interrupted Bubbleton, rubbing his hands pleasantly, "so much the better. Wish

them good evening, Tom, my hearty; we shall be back in time for supper. You wouldn't take an oyster, Mr. Cooke?"

"I thank you very much, but I am unfortunately engaged."

"Not so fast, captain, I beg you," said Basset, with a most servile, but malignant expression in his features. "The habits I would inculcate to my apprentice are not exactly consistent with mess-parties and barrack-suppers."

"Apprentice! apprentice!" said Bubbleton, starting as if stung by a wasp. "Eh! you're surely not — not the — the —"

"Yes, Sir; there's the indenture, signed and sealed, if you are desirous to satisfy yourself. The young gentleman himself will not deny his father's instructions concerning him."

I hung down my head abashed and ashamed. The tears started to my eyes; I turned away to wipe them, and feared to face the others again; I saw that Bubbleton, my only friend, believed I had practised some deceit on him — and how to explain, without disclosing what I dare not! There was a bustle in the room — a sound of voices — the noise of feet descending the stairs; and when I again looked round, they were all gone, save Basset, who was leisurely collecting his papers together, and fastening them with a string. I turned my eyes everywhere, to see if Bubbleton had not remained. But no, he had left me like the rest, and I was alone with the man I most dreaded and disliked of all the world.

"Well, Sir," said Basset, as he thrust the papers into the pocket of his great coat, "I'm ready now."

"Where to, Sir?" replied I, sternly, as he moved to leave the room; for without thinking of how and why I was to succeed in it, a vague resolution of defiance flitted through my mind.

"To *my* house, Sir, or to Newgate, if you prefer it. Don't mistake, young gentleman, for a moment the position you occupy — you owe your liberation at this moment not to any merits of your own. Your connection with the disaffected and rebellious body is well known: my interest with the government is your only protection. Again, Sir, let me add, that I have no peculiar desire for your company in my family: neither the habits nor the opinions you have acquired will suit those you'll meet there."

"Why, then, have you interfered with me?" said I passionately. "Why not have left me to my fate? Be it what it might, it would have been not less acceptable, I assure you, than to become an inmate of your house."

"That question were very easily answered," said he, interrupting me.

"Then why not do so?"

"Come, come, Sir, these are not the terms which are to subsist between us, nor is this the place to discuss our difference. Follow me."

He led the way down stairs as he spoke, and, taking my arm within his, turned into the street. Without a word on either side we proceeded down Parliament-street, and crossing Essex-bridge followed the quays for some time, then turning into Stafford-street we arrived at a house, when having taken a latch-key from his pocket, Basset opened the door and ushered me in, muttering half aloud as he

turned the key in the lock, and fastened the bolt, "safe at last." We turned from the narrow hall into a small parlour, which, from its dingy furniture of writing-desk and stools, I guessed to serve as an office. Here my companion lit a candle from the embers of the fire, and having carefully closed the door he motioned me to a seat.

"I have already told you, Sir, that I am not in the least covetous of your company in my house — — circumstances, which I may or may not explain hereafter, have led me to rescue you from the disgrace you must eventually have brought upon your family."

"Hold, Sir, I have none, save a brother —"

"Well, Sir, and your brother's feelings are, I trust, not to be slightingly treated — a young gentleman whose position and prospects are of the very highest order."

"You are his agent, I perceive, Mr. Basset," said I, with a significant smile.

"I am, Sir," replied he, with a deep flush that mounted even to his forehead.

"Then let me save you all further trouble on my account," said I calmly. "My brother's indifference to me or my fate has long since absolved me from any regret I might feel for the consequences which my actions might induce on *his* fortunes. His own conduct must stamp him, as mine must me. I choose to judge for myself, and not even Mr. Basset shall decide for me, although I am well aware his powers of discrimination have had the double advantage of experience on both sides of the question."

As I said this, his face became almost livid, and his white lips quivered with passion. He knew not before

that I was acquainted with his history, nor that I knew of his having sold to the government, information, which brought his schoolfellow and benefactor to the scaffold.

"Come, come," continued I, gaining courage, as I saw the effect my words produced. "It is not your interest to injure me, however it may be your wish. Is there no arrangement we can come to, mutually advantageous? We shall be but sorry companions. I ought to have some property under my grandfather's will."

"There is, I believe, five hundred pounds," said Basset, with a slow distinctness, as if not rejecting the turn the conversation had taken.

"Well, then, what will you take and cancel that indenture? You don't set a very high value on my services, I suppose."

"You forget, I perceive," said he, "that I am answerable for your future appearance if called on."

"There was no bail-bond drawn out, no sum mentioned, if I mistake not, Mr. Basset."

"Very true, Sir, very true; but I pledged myself to the law adviser — my character is responsible."

"Well, well, let me have two hundred pounds — burn that cursed indenture —"

"Two hundred pounds! Do you fancy then that you are in the possession of this legacy? Why, it never may, in all likelihood it never will, be yours — it's only payable on your attaining your majority."

"Give me one hundred pounds, then — give me fifty — let me only be free, at liberty, and not absolutely a beggar on the streets."

Basset leaned his head on the chimney, and seemed sunk in reflection, while I, wound up to the highest

pitch of excitement, trod up and down the room — pouring forth from time to time short and broken sentences, declaratory of my desire to surrender all that I might chance to inherit by every casualty in life to my last guinea, only let there be no constraint on my actions — no attempt to control my personal liberty.

“I see,” cried I, passionately, “I see what hampers you — you fear I may compromise my *family*! It is my brother’s fair fame you are thinking of; but away with all dread on that score — I’ll leave Ireland — I have long since determined on that.”

“Indeed!” said Basset slowly, as he turned round his head, and looked me full in the face. “Would you go to America, then?”

“To America! no — to France! that shall be the land of my adoption, as it is this moment of all my heart’s longings.”

His eyes sparkled, and a gleam of pleasure shot across his cold features, as if he caught a glow of the enthusiasm that lit up mine.

“Come,” cried he, “I’ll think of this — give me till to-morrow, and if you’ll pledge yourself to leave Ireland within a week —”

“I’ll pledge myself to nothing of the kind,” replied I fiercely. “It is to be free — free in thought as in act, that I would barter all my prospects with you. There must be but one compact between us — it must begin and end here. Take a night if you will to think it over; and to-morrow morning —”

“Well, then, to-morrow morning be it,” said he, with more of animation in his tone, “and now to supper.”

“To bed, rather,” said I, “if I may speak my mind, for rest is what I now stand most in need of.”

CHAPTER XVII.

Mr. Basset's dwelling.

EXCEPTING the two dingy-looking, dust-covered parlours, which served as office and dining-room, the only portion of Mr. Basset's dwelling untenanted by lodgers were the attics. The large brass plate that adorned the hall-door, setting forth in conspicuous letters, "Anthony Basset, attorney," gave indeed a most inadequate notion of the mixed population within, whose respectability, in the inverse ratio of their height from the ground, went on growing beautifully less, till it found its culminating point in the host himself, on whose venerable head the light streamed from a cobweb-covered pane in the roof. The stairs were dark and narrow, the walls covered with a dull-coloured old wainscot, that flapped and banged with every foot that came and went, while the windows were defended by strong iron railings, as if any thing inside them could possibly demand such means of protection.

I followed Mr. Basset as he led the way up these apparently interminable stairs, till at length the decreasing head-room betokened that we were near the slates. Mumbling a half apology for the *locale*, he introduced me into a long, low attic, where a settle-bed of the humblest pretensions, and a single rush-bottomed chair supporting a basin, were the only articles of furniture. Something like the drop-curtain of a strolling theatre closed up the distance; but this I could only perceive imperfectly by the dim twilight of a dipt candle; and in my state of fatigue and weariness

ness, I had little inclination to explore further. Wishing me a good night, and promising that I should be called betimes next morning, Mr. Basset took his leave, while I, overcome by a long day of care and anxiety, threw myself on the bed, and slept far more soundly than I could have believed it were possible for me to do under the roof of Anthony Basset.

The sun was streaming in a rich flood of yellow light through a small sky-light, and playing its merry gambols on the floor when I awoke. The birds, too, were singing; and the hum of the street noises, mellowed by distance, broke not unpleasantly on the ear. It did not take me long to remember where I was, and why. The conversation of the evening before recurred at once to my mind, and hope, stronger than ever before I felt it, filled my heart. It was clear, Basset could place little value on such services as mine; and if I could only contrive to make it his interest to part with me, he would not hesitate about it. I resolved that whatever price he put upon my freedom, if in my power, I should pay it. My next plan was, to find out through some of the persons in correspondence with France the means of reaching that country, in whose military service I longed to enrol myself. Had I but the papers of my poor friend Charles de Meudon, there had been little difficulty in this; but, unfortunately, they were seized by Major Barton on the day of his death, and I had never seen them since.

While I revolved these thoughts within myself I heard the merry notes of a girl's voice, singing, apparently, in the very room with me. I started up and looked about me, and now perceived that what seemed

so like a drop-curtain the night before, was nothing more or less than a very large patch-work quilt, suspended on a line across the entire attic, from the other side of which came the sounds in question. It was clear, both from the melody and the voice, that she could not be a servant; and somewhat curious to know more of my fair neighbour, I rose gently, and slipping on my clothes, approached the boundary of my territory with noiseless step.

A kind of whistling noise interrupted every now and then the lady's song, and an occasional outbreak of impatience would burst forth in the middle of the "Arrah, will you marry me, dear Alley Croker," by some malediction on a "black knot" or a broken string. I peeped over the "drop," and beheld the figure of a young, plump, and pretty girl, busily engaged in lacing her stays — an occupation which accounted equally for the noise of the rushing stay-lace and the bit of peevishness I had heard. I quite forgot how inadvisable was the indulgence of my curiosity in my admiration of my fair neighbour, whose buxom figure, not the less attractive for the shortness of her drapery, showed itself to peculiar advantage as she bent to one side and the other in her efforts to fasten the impracticable boddice. A mass of rich brown hair, on which the sun was playing, fell over her neck and on her shoulders, and half concealed her round, well-turned arms as they plied their busy task.

"Well, ain't my heart broke with you entirely!" exclaimed she, as a stubborn knot stopped all further progress. At this moment the cord, on which through inadvertence I had leaned somewhat too heavily, gave way, and down came the curtain with a squash to the

floor. She sprang back with a bound, and, while a slight but momentary blush flushed her cheek, stared at me half-angrily, and then cried out — “Well, I hope you like me?”

“Yes, that I do,” said I, readily — “and who wouldn’t that saw you?”

Whether it was the *naïveté* of my confession, or my youth, or both, I can’t well say; but she laughed heartily at my speech, and threw herself into a chair to indulge her mirth.

“So we were neighbours, it seems,” said I.

“And if we were,” said she, roguishly, “I think it’s a very unceremonious way you’ve opened the acquaintance.”

“You forget, apparently, I haven’t left my own territory.”

“Well, I’m sure I wish you would, if you’re any good at a black knot: my heart and my nails are both broke with one here.”

I didn’t wait for any more formal invitation, but stepped at once over the frontier — while she, rising from the chair, turned her back towards me, as with her finger she directed me to the most chaotic assemblage of knots, twists, loops, and entanglements, I ever beheld.

“And you’re Burke, I suppose,” cried she, as I commenced my labours.

“Yes, I’m Burke.”

“Well, I hope you’re done with wildness by this time. Uncle Tony tells fine tales of your doings.”

“Uncle Tony! So you’re Mr. Basset’s niece — is that so?”

"You didn't take me for his wife, I hope," said she, again bursting out into laughter.

"In truth, I never thought so well of him as to suppose it."

"Well, well, I'm sure it's little I expected you to look so mild and so quiet; but you needn't pinch me for all that. Isn't your name Tom?"

"Yes, I hope you'll always call me so."

"Maybe I will. Isn't that done yet? and there's the milk bell. Uncle will be in a nice passion if I'm not down soon — cut it — cut it at once."

"Now do be patient for a minute or two — it's all right if you stay quiet. I'll try my teeth on it."

"Yes, but you needn't try your lips too," said she, tartly.

"Why, it's the only plan to get your fingers out of the way. I'm sure I never was so puzzled in all my life."

"Nothing like practice, my boy, nothing," cried a merry voice from the door behind me, half choked with laughing, while a muttered anathema, in a deeper tone, followed. I looked back, and there stood Bubbleton, his face florid with laughter, endeavouring to hold back Mr. Basset, whose angry look and flashing eye there was no mistaking.

"Mr. Burke — Burke, I say — Nelly, what does this mean? How came this young gentleman —"

"As to that," said I, interrupting him, and my blood somewhat chafed by his manner, "this piece of trumpery tumbled down when I leaned my arm on it. I had no idea —"

"No, no; to be sure not," broke in Bubbleton, in an ecstasy. "The thing was delicious; such a bit of

stage effect. She was there, as it might be, combing her hair, and all that sort of thing. Tom was here raving about absence, and eternal separation. You are an angry father, or uncle — all the same: and I'm Count Neitztachenitz, the old friend and brother-officer of Tom's father. Now let Miss Nelly — but where is she? why she's gone! Eh, and Basset, Basset — why he's gone! Come, Tom, don't you go too. I say, my boy, devilish well got up that. You ought to have had a white satin doublet and hose, slashed with pale cherry colour ribbons to match, small hat looped, aigrette and white plume. She was perfect — her leg and foot were three certain rounds of applause from the pit and gallery."

"What nonsense," said I angrily; "we weren't playing a comedy."

"Weren't you though? well, I'm deuced sorry for it, that's all; but it did look confoundedly like an undress rehearsal."

"Come, come, no foolery, I beg. I'm here in a very sad plight, and this piece of nonsense may not make matters any better. Listen to me, if you can, patiently for five minutes, and give me your advice."

I took him by the arm as I spoke, and leading him from the room, where I saw that every thing was only suggesting some piece of scenic effect, and in as few words as I could command, explained how I was circumstanced; omitting of course any detail of my political bias, and only stated so much of my desires as implied my wish to be free of my contract with Basset, and at liberty to dispose of myself as I liked in future.

"I see," cried Bubbleton, as I finished; "the old fox has this five hundred pounds of yours."

"No, I didn't say that; I only mean —"

"Well, well, it's all the same. If he hasn't, you know, he ought."

"No; that's not essential either."

"No matter, he would if he could; it just comes to the same thing: and you only wish to get clear out of his hands at any cost. Isn't that it?"

"Exactly; you have it all perfectly."

"Bless your heart, boy, there's nothing easier. If I were in your place, I should arrange the affair in less than a week. I'd have fits — strong fits, and burn all the papers in the office during the paroxysm. I'd make a pile of deeds, leases, bonds, and settlements in the back yard."

"I don't fancy your plan would be so successful as you flatter yourself," said a dry husky voice behind: "there's rather a stringent law for refractory apprentices, as Mr. Burke may learn." We turned round, and there stood Mr. Basset, with a grin of most diabolical malignity in his by no means pleasant features. "At the same time," continued he, "your suggestions are of infinite value, and shall be duly appreciated in the King's Bench."

"Eh — King's Bench! Lord bless you, don't speak of it. Mere trifles — I just threw them out as good hints. I had fifty far better to come. There's the young lady now — to be sure, he has started that notion himself, so I must not pretend it was mine; but Miss Nelly, I think, Tom —"

"Mr. Basset is well aware," interrupted I, "that I am only desirous to be free and untrammelled; that whatever little means I may derive from my family, I'm willing to surrender all, short of actual beggary, to attain this object — that I intend quitting Ireland at

once. If then he consent to enter into an arrangement with me, let it be at once, and on the spot. I have no desire, I have no power to force him by a threat, in case of refusal; but I hope he will make so much of amend to one, of whose present desolation and poverty he is not altogether innocent."

"There, there; that's devilish well said; the whole thing is all clear before me. So come along, Basset, you and I will settle all this. Have you got a private room where we can have five minutes' chat together? Tom, wait for me here."

Before either of us could consent or oppose his arrangement, he had taken Basset's arm, and led him down stairs, while I, in a flurry of opposing and conflicting resolves, sat down to think over my fortunes.

Tired at length with waiting, and half suspecting that my volatile friend had forgotten me and all my concerns, I descended to the parlour in hopes to hear something of the pending negotiation. At the head of a long narrow table sat my fair acquaintance, Miss Nelly, her hair braided very modestly at each side of her pretty face, which had now assumed an almost Quakerish propriety of expression. She was busily engaged in distributing tea to three pale, red-eyed, emaciated men, whose spongy-looking, thread-bare garments bespoke to be attorneys' clerks: a small imp, a kind of embryo practitioner, knelt before the fire in the act of toasting bread; but followed with his sharp piercing eyes every stir in the apartment, and seemed to watch with malicious pleasure the wry faces around, whenever any undue dilution of the bohea, or any curtailment of the blue milk pressed heavily on the guests. These were not exactly the circumstances to

renew my acquaintance with my fair neighbour, had I been so minded; so having declined her offer of breakfast, I leaned moodily on the chimney-piece, my anxiety to know my fate becoming each instant more painful. Meanwhile, not a word was spoken — a sad moody silence, unbroken save by the sounds of eating, pervaded all, when suddenly the door of the front parlour was flung open, and Bubbleton's pleasant voice was heard as he talked away unceasingly; in an instant he entered followed by Basset, over whose hard countenance a shade of better nature seemed to pass.

"In that case," cried the captain, "I'm your man, not that I'm any thing of a performer at breakfast or dinner; supper's rather my forte — an odour of a broiled bone at three in the morning, a herring smeared with chetna, and grilled with brandy, two hundred of small oysters, a few hot ones to close with, a glass of Seltzer dashed with Hollands, for health, and then, any number you like of glasses of hot brandy and water afterwards for pleasure."

While Bubbleton ran on in this fashion, he had broken about half a dozen eggs into the slop basin, and seasoning the mess with pepper and vinegar, was busily engaged in illustrating the moderation of his morning appetite.

"Try a thing like this, Tom," cried he, not defining how it was to be effected under the circumstances, while he added in a whisper, "your affair's all right."

These few words brought courage to my heart; and I ventured to begin the breakfast that had lain untasted before me.

"I think Mr. Burke," said Basset, as soon as he

recovered from the surprise Bubbleton's mode of breakfasting had excited — "I think and trust that all has been arranged to your satisfaction:" then turning to the clerks, who eat away without even lifting their heads, "Mr. Muggridge, you will be late at the master's office; Jones, take that parcel to Hennet; Kit carry my bag up to the courts."

Miss Nelly did not wait for the part destined for her; but with a demure face rose from the table and left the room, giving me, however, one sly glance as she passed my chair, that I remembered for many a day after.

"You'll excuse me, gentlemen, if I am pressed for time this morning — a very particular case comes on in the Common Pleas."

"Never speak of it, my dear fellow," said Bubbleton, who had just addressed himself to a round of spiced beef, — "business has its calls, just as pleasure has — ay, and appetite too. — That would make an excellent bit of supper, with some mulled port, after a few rubbers of shorts."

Basset paid little attention to this speech; but turning to me, continued,

"You mentioned your intention of leaving Ireland, I think; might I ask where you have decided on — from where — It is possible that your brother —"

"My brother's anxieties on my account, Mr. Basset, can scarcely be very poignant, and deserve no particular respect or attention at my hands. I suppose that this morning has concluded all necessary intercourse between us; and if you have satisfied my friend Captain Bubbleton —"

"Perfectly, perfectly — another cup of tea, if you

please — yes, nothing could be more gratifying than Mr. Basset's conduct — you are merely to sign the receipt for the legacy, and he hands you over one hundred pounds; isn't that it?"

"Yes, quite correct; my bill for one hundred at three months."

"That's what I mean; but surely you're not done breakfast — why, Tom, you've eaten nothing — I have been picking away this half hour, just to encourage you a bit — well, well, I lunch in Stephen's-green at three, so here goes."

Mr. Basset now took from his pocket-book some papers, which, having glanced his eye over, he handed to me.

"This is a kind of acknowledgment, Mr. Burke, for the receipt of a legacy to which you could be only entitled on attaining your majority; here are your indentures to me, and this is my acceptance for one hundred pounds."

"I am content," said I, eagerly, as I seized the pen. The thought of my liberty alone filled my mind, and I cared little for the conditions, provided I secured *that*.

Basset proffered his hand; I was in no humour to reject any thing that even simulated cordiality; I shook it heartily. Bubbleton followed my example, and, having pledged himself to see more of his pleasant acquaintance, thrust his arm through mine, and bustled out, adding in a tone loud enough to be overheard — "Made a capital fight of it — told him you were a defender, a united Irishman, a peep-o'-day boy, and all that sort of thing — devilish glad to get rid of you, even on Miss Nelly's account," and so he rattled

away without ceasing, until we found ourselves at the George's-street barracks, my pre-occupation of mind preventing my even having remarked what way we came.

CHAPTER XVIII.

The Captain's quarters.

I WAS not sorry to find that Miss Bubbleton did not respond to the noisy summons of the captain as he flourished about from one room to the other, making the quarters echo to the sweet name of "Anna Maria." "Saladin," "Grimes," "Peter," were also shouted out unsuccessfully; and with a fierce menace against various grooms of the chambers, waiting-men, and lackeys, who happily were still unborn, Bubbleton flung himself into a seat, and began to conjecture what had become of the inhabitants.

"She's paying a morning call — gone to see the duchess — that's it, or perhaps she's looking over that suit of pearls I bought yesterday at Gallon's — pretty baubles, but dear at eight hundred pounds — never mind, what's money for — eh, Tom?"

As he looked at me for a reply I drew my chair closer towards him, and assuming as much of importance as my manner could command, I besought his attention for a moment. Hitherto, partly from my own indecision, partly from his flighty and volatile bearing, I never had an opportunity either to explain my real position or my political sentiments, much less my intentions for the future. The moment had at length arrived, and I resolved to profit by it; and, in as few words as I was able, gave a brief narrative of my life from the hour of my father's death to the day in which I fell into his own hands in Dublin, only omitting

such portions as might, by the mention of names, compromise others concerned.

Nothing could possibly be more attentive than he was, during the entire detail — he leaned his head on his hand, and listened with eager curiosity to all my scrapes and difficulties, occasionally nodding in assent, and now evincing by his excited air his desire to learn further; and when I at last wound up by avowing my long-cherished desire to enter the French service, he sat perfectly silent and seemed to reflect gravely on the whole.

“I say, Tom,” said he at length, as he stared me full in the face, and laid his hand impressively on my knee, “there’s good stuff in that — excellent stuff! depend upon it!”

“Good stuff! what do you mean?” said I, in amazement.

“I mean,” replied he, “there’s bone in it, sinew in it, substance in it — there are some admirable situations too. How Fulham would come out in Tony Basset — brown shorts, white stockings, high shoes and buckles — his own very costume; and there’s that little thing Miss Booth, for Nelly, give her a couple of songs, ballad airs take best; Williams should be Barton — a devilish fine villain in coarse parts, Williams. I think I see him stealing along by the flats with his soldiers to the attack. Then the second act should open — interior of hut — peasants round a table — eating always successful on the stage — nothing like seeing a fat fellow bolting hard eggs, and blustering out unpronounceable jokes over a flagon of coloured water — you by right should have your own part — splendid thing — devilish fine, your sensations

when the cabin was on fire, and the fellows were prodding about with their bayonets to discover you."

"And who's to perform Captain Bubbleton?" asked I, venturing for once to humour his absurdity.

"Eh? — oh, there's nothing for me, no marked feature, nothing strong, nothing characteristic. That has been through life my greatest, my very highest ambition — that no man should ever detect by any thing in my manner, my dress, or my style of conversation, that I was not John Nokes, or Peter Styles. You'll meet me at a dinner party, Tom, you'll converse with me, drink with me, we'll sit the evening together, grow intimate — perhaps you'll borrow fifty pounds of me, and yet I'd wager another, you'd never guess that I rode a hippopotamus across the Ganges after tiffin one day, to pay my respects to the governor-general. That, let me tell you, Tom, is the very proudest boast a man can make. Do you see that scar? It looks nothing now — that was a bite from a ferocious boa; the villain got into my room before breakfast, he had eaten my chokadar, a fellow I was very fond of —"

"Ah, I remember you mentioned that to me. And now to come back to my dull story, to which I assure you, however dramatic you may deem it, I'd prefer adding an act or so before it comes before the world. I intend to leave this to-morrow."

"No, no, you mustn't think of it yet awhile — why, my dear fellow, you've a hundred pounds — only think of that; twenty will bring you to Paris, less if you choose. I once travelled from Glugdamuck to the Ghauts of Bunderamud for half a rupee — put my elephants on three biscuits a day — explained to

them in Hindostanee, a most expressive language, that our provisions had fallen short — that on our arrival all arrears of grub should be made up. They tossed up their trunks thus in token of assent, and on we marched. Well, when we came to Helgie, there was no water —”

“Very true,” interrupted I, half in despair at the torrent of story-telling I had got involved in; “but you forget I have neither elephants nor camels, nor coolies, nor chokadars — I’m a mere adventurer with, except yourself, not a friend in the world.”

“Then why not join us?” cried the ever-ready captain. “We are to have our orders for foreign service in a few weeks — you’ve only to volunteer; you’ve money enough to buy your kit. When you’re fairly in, it’s only writing to your brother; besides, something always turns up: that’s my philosophy. I rarely want any thing I don’t find means to obtain, somehow or other.”

“No,” said I, resolutely, “I will never join the service of a country which has inflicted such foul wrong on my native land.”

“All stuff and nonsense,” cried Bubbleton. “Who cares the deuce of clubs about politics; when you’re my age, you’ll find that if you’re not making something of politics, they’ll make very little of you. I’d as soon sell figs for my grocer, or snuff for my tobacconist, as I’d bother my head governing the kingdom for Billy Pitt — he’s paid for it; that’s his business, not mine. No, no, my boy, join us — you shall be ‘*Burke of ours*’ — we’ll have a glorious campaign among the Yankees. I’ll teach you the Seneca language — and we’ll have a ramble through the Indian settlements. Meanwhile, you dine to-day

at the mess; to-morrow, we pic-nic at the Dargle; next day, we — what the deuce is next day to be — oh, yes, next day we all dine with you. Nothing stiff or formal — a snug, quiet thing for sixteen — I'll manage it all."

Here was an argument there was no resisting, so I complied at once, comforting myself with a silent vow come what might I'd leave Ireland the day after my dinner-party.

Under whatever guise, with what history of my rank, wealth, and family influence, Bubbleton thought proper to present me to his brother officers I cannot say; but nothing could possibly be more kind, or even more cordial, than their reception of me; and although I had some difficulty in replying to questions put under mistaken notions of my position and intentions, I readily followed, as far as I was able, the line suggested by my imaginative friend, whose representations, I suspected, would be received with a suitable limitation by his old associates.

There is, perhaps, no species of society so striking and so captivating to the young man entering on life, as that of a military mess. The easy, well-bred intimacy, that never degenerates into undue familiarity — the good-humoured, playful raillery, that never verges on coarseness or severity — the happy blending of old men's wisdom and young men's buoyancy — are all very attractive features of social intercourse, even independently of the stronger interest that invests the companionship of men whose career is arms. I felt this; and enjoyed it too not the less pleasantly that I discovered no evidence of that violent partizan feeling I had been led to believe was the distinguishing mark

of the royalist soldier. If by chance any allusion was made to the troubles of the period, it was invariably done rather in a tone of respect for mistaken and ill-directed political views, than in reprehension of disloyalty and rebellion; and when I heard the dispassionate opinions, and listened to the mild counsels of these men, whom I had always believed to be the veriest tyrants and oppressors, I could scarcely credit my own senses, so utterly opposed were my impressions and my experience. One only of the party evinced an opposite feeling. He was a pale, thin, rather handsome man, of about five and twenty, who had lately joined them from a dragoon regiment, and who, by sundry little innuendos, was ever bringing uppermost the preference he evinced for his former service, and his ardent desire to be back again in the cavalry.

Captain Montague Crofts was, indeed, the only exception I witnessed to the almost brotherly feeling that prevailed in the forty-fifth. Instead of identifying himself with the habits and opinions of his brother officers, he held himself studiously apart. Regarding his stay in the regiment like a period of probation, he seemed resolved to form neither intimacies nor friendships, but to wait patiently for the time of his leaving the corps, to emancipate himself from a society below his caste.

The cold, repulsive, steady stare, the scarcely-bowed head, the impassive silence with which he heard the words of Bubbleton's introduction of me, formed a strong contrast with the warm cordiality of the others; and though at the time little disposed to criticise the manner of any one, and still less to be dissatisfied with

any thing, I conceived from the moment a dislike to Captain Crofts, which I felt to increase with every minute I spent in his company. The first occasion which suggested this dislike on my part was, from observing that while Bubbleton — whose historical accuracy, or blind adherence to reality, no one in the corps thought of requiring — narrated some of his incredible adventures, Crofts, far from joining in the harmless mirth which such tales created, invariably took delight in questioning and cross-questioning the worthy captain, quoting him against himself, and playing off a hundred tricks which, however smart and witty in a law court, are downright rudenesses when practised in society. Bubbleton, it is true, saw nothing in all this save the natural interest of a good listener: but the others did; and it was quite clear to me, that while one was the greatest favourite in the regiment, the other had not a single friend amongst them. To me, Crofts manifested the most perfect indifference — not ever mixing himself in any conversation in which I bore a part. He rarely turned his head towards the part of the table at which I sat; and by an air of haughty superciliousness gave me plainly to understand that our acquaintance, though confessedly begun, was to proceed no further. I cannot say how happy I felt to learn, that one I had so much cause to dislike, was a violent aristocrat, an ultra-Tory — a most uncompromising denouncer of the Irish liberal party, and an out-and-out advocate of severe and harsh measures towards the people. He never missed an opportunity for the enunciation of such doctrines, which, whatever might be the opinions of the listeners, there was, at the time I speak of, no

small risk in gainsaying; and this immunity did Crofts enjoy to his heart's content.

Slight as these few reminiscences of the mess are, they are the called-up memories of days not to be forgotten by me. For now, what with my habitual indecision on the one hand, and Bubbleton's solicitations on the other, I continued to linger on in Dublin, leading the careless, easy life of those about me, joining in all the plots for amusement which the capital afforded, and mixing in every society to which my military friends had access. Slender as were my resources, they sufficed, in the eyes of all who knew not their limit, to appear abundant. Crofts was the only rich man in the regiment; and my willingness to enter into every scheme of pleasure, regardless of cost, impressed them all with the notion that Bubbleton for once was right, and that "Burke was a kind of west-country Cræsus," invaluable to the regiment.

Week after week rolled on, and still did I find myself a denizen of George's-street: the silly routine of the barrack life filled all my thoughts, save when the waning condition of my purse would momentarily turn them towards the future; but these moments of reflection came but seldom, and at last came not at all. It was autumn — the town almost divested of its inhabitants, at least of all who could leave it; and along the parched, sun-burnt streets, a stray jingle or a noddy was rarely seen to pass. The squares, so lately crowded with equipages and cavalcades of horsemen, were silent and deserted; the closed shutters of every house, and the grass-grown steps, vouched for the absence of the owners. The same dreamy lethargy that seemed to rest over the deserted city, appeared to pervade every thing;

and save a certain subdued activity among the officials of the Castle — a kind of ground-swell movement that boded something important — there was nothing stirring. The great measure of the "Union," which had been carried on the night of the riots, had however annihilated the hopes of the Irish liberal party; and many who once had taken a leading part in politics had now deserted public life for ever.

They with whom I associated cared but little for these things. There were but two or three Irish in the regiment, and they had long since lost all their nationality in the wear and tear of the service; so that I heard nothing of what occupied the public mind, and lived on in the very midst of the threatening hurricane, in a calm as deep as death itself.

I had neither seen Barton nor Basset since the day of my leave-taking; and, stranger still, never could meet with Darby, who seemed to have deserted Dublin. The wreck of the party he belonged to seemed now effectually accomplished, and the prospect of Irish independence was lost, as it seemed, for ever.

I was sitting one evening in the window of Bubbleton's quarters, thinking over these things, not without self-reproach for the life I was leading, so utterly adverse to the principles I had laid down for my guidance. I thought of poor De Meudon, and all his ambitious dreams for my success, and I felt my cheek flush with shame for my base desertion of the cause to which, with his dying breath, he devoted me. I brought up in memory those happy evenings, as we wandered through the fields talking over the glorious campaigns of Italy, or speculating on the mighty changes we believed yet before us; and then I thought of the reckless orgies in which my

present life was passed. I remembered how his full voice would falter when one great name fell from his lips; and with what reverence he touched his chapeau as the word "Buonaparte" escaped from him! — and how my heart thrilled to think of an enthusiasm that could light up the dying embers of a broken heart, and make it flash out in vivid brilliancy once more! and longed to feel as he did.

For the first time for some weeks I found myself alone. Bubbleton was on guard; and though I had promised to join him at supper, I lingered at home, to think and ponder over the past: I scarcely dared to face the future. It was growing dusky. The rich golden arch of an autumn moon could be seen through the hazy mist of that half frost which is at this season the sure harbinger of a hot day on the morrow. The street noises had gradually died away, and save the distant sound of a ballad-singer, whose mournful cadence fell sadly on the ear, I heard nothing.

Without perceiving it, I found myself listening to the doggrel of the minstrel, who, like most of her fellows of the period, was celebrating the means that had been used by government to carry their favourite measure, the union with England. There was, indeed, very little to charm the ear, or win the sense, in either the accent or the sentiment of the melody; yet somehow she had contrived to collect a pretty tolerable audience, who moved slowly along with her down the street, and evinced by many an outburst of enthusiasm how thoroughly they relished the pointed allusions of the verse, and how completely they enjoyed the dull satire of the song.

As they approached the barracks, the procession

came to a halt, probably deeming that so valuable a lesson should not be lost to his majesty's service; and, forming into a circle around the singer, a silence was commanded — when, with that quavering articulation so characteristic of the tribe, and that strange quality of voice that seems to alternate between a high treble and a deep bass, the lady began —

“Don't be crowdin' an me that a way. There it is now — ye're tearin' the cloak off the back o' me! Divil receave the note I'll sing, if ye don't behave — And look at his honour up there, wid a tenpenny bit in the heel of his fist for me. The Lord reward your purty face — 't is yourself has the darlin' blue eyes! — Bad scrán to yez, ye blaggards — look at my elegant bonnet the way you've made it!”

“Arrah! rise the tune, and don't be blarneying the young gentleman,” said a voice from the crowd; and then added, in a lower but very audible tone — “Them chaps hasn't a farthin' beyond their pay — three and ninepence a day, and find themselves in pipeclay!”

A rude laugh followed this insolent speech; and the ballad-singer, whose delay had only been a *ruse* to attract a sufficient auditory, then began to a very well-known air —

“Come hither, M. P.'s, and I'll tell

My advice, and I'm sure you'll not mock it:

Whoe'er has a country to sell,

Need never want gold in his pocket.

Your brother a bishop shall be —

Yourself — if you only will make a

Voice in our ma-jo-rity —

We'll make you chief judge in Jamaica.

Tol, lol de rol, tol de rol lay!”

The mob-chorus here broke in, and continued with

such hearty enthusiasm, that I lost the entire of the next verse in the tumult.

“Your father, they say, is an ass,
 And your mother, not noted for knowledge;
 But he ’ll do very well at Madras,
 And she shall be provost of college.
 Your aunt, lady’s-maid to the queen;
 And Bill, if he ’ll give up his rakin’,
 And not drunk in day-time be seen,
 I ’ll make him a rosy archdeacon.
 Tol, lol de rol, tol de rol lay!

A jollier set ne’er was seen,
 Than you ’ll be, when freed from your callin’,
 With an empty house in College-green —
 What an elegant place to play ball in
 Ould Foster stand by with his mace,
 He ’ll do mighty well for a marker;
 John Toler —”

“Here ’s the polis!” said a gruff voice from the crowd; and the word was repeated from mouth to mouth in every accent of fear and dread, while in an instant all took to flight, some dashing down obscure lanes and narrow alleys, others running straight onwards towards Dame-street, but all showing the evident apprehension they felt at the approach of these dreaded officials. The ballad-singer alone did not move. Whether too old or too infirm to trust to speed, or too much terrified to run, I know not; but there she stood, the last cadence of her song still dying on her lips, while the clattering sounds of men advancing rapidly were heard in the distant street.

I know not why, some strange momentary impulse, half pity, half caprice, moved me to her rescue, and I called out to the sentry — “Let that woman pass in!” She heard the words, and with an activity greater than I could have expected, sprang into the barrack-yard,

while the police passed eagerly on in vain pursuit of their victims.

I remained motionless in the window-seat, watching the now silent street, when a gentle tap came to my door. I opened it, and there stood the figure of the ballad-singer, her ragged cloak gathered closely across her face with one hand, while with the other she held the bundle of printed songs, her only stock in trade.

CHAPTER XIX.

The quarrel.

WHILE I stood gazing at the uncouth and ragged figure before me, she pushed rudely past, and, shutting the door behind her, asked in a low whisper, "are ye alone?" and then, without waiting for a reply, threw back the tattered bonnet that covered her head, and, removing a wig of long black hair, stared steadfastly at me.

"Do you know me now?" said the hag, in a voice of almost menacing eagerness.

"What!" cried I, in amazement, "it surely cannot be — Darby, is this really you?"

"Ye may well say it," replied he bitterly. "Ye had time enough to forget me since we met last; and 't is thinking twice your grand friends the officers would be, before they'd put their necks where mine is now to see you. Read that" — as he spoke he threw a ragged and torn piece of printed paper on the table — "read that; and you'll see there's five hundred pounds of blood-money to the man that takes me. Ay, and here I stand this minit in the king's barrack, and walked fifty-four miles this blessed day just to see you and speak to you once more. — Well, well," he

turned away his head while he said this, and wiping a starting tear from his red eye-ball, he added — “Master Tom, ’t is myself would never b’lieve ye done it.”

“Did what?” said I, eagerly: “what have I ever done that you should charge me thus?”

But Darby heard me not: his eyes were fixed on vacancy, and his lips moved rapidly as though he were speaking to himself. “Ay,” said he half aloud, “true enough, ’t is the gentlemen that betrayed us always — never came good of the cause where they took a part. But you” — here he turned full round, and grasping my arm, spoke directly to me — “you that I loved better than my own kith and kin, that I thought would one day be a pride and glory to us all — you that I brought over myself to the cause —”

“And when have I deserted — when have I betrayed it?”

“When did you desert it?” repeated he, in a tone of mocking irony. “Tell me the day and the hour ye came here — tell me the first time ye sat down among the red butchers of King George, and I’ll answer ye that. Is it here you ought to be? Is this the home for him that has a heart for Ireland? I never said you betrayed us; others said it — but I stood to it, ye never did that. But what does it signify? ’T is no wonder ye left us; we were poor and humble people, we had nothing at heart but the good cause —”

“Stop,” cried I, maddened by this taunts — “what could I have done? where was my place?”

“Don’t ask me. If your own heart doesn’t teach ye, how can I? But it’s over now — the day is gone, and I must take to the road again. My heart is lighter since I seen you, and it will be lighter again when I

give you this warnin' — God knows if you'll mind it: you think yourself safe now since you joined the sodgers — you'd think they trust you, and that Barton's eye isn't on ye still — there isn't a word you say isn't noted down — not a man you spake to, isn't watched! You don't know it, but I know it. There's more go to the gallows in Ireland over their wine, than with the pike in their hands. Take care of your friends, I say."

"You wrong them, Darby, and you wrong me. Never have I heard from one here a single word that could offend the proudest heart among us."

"Why would they — what need of it; ar'n't we down, down — ar'n't we hunted like wild beasts; is the roof left to shelter us; dare we walk the roads; dare we say 'God save ye' when we meet, and not be tried for pass-words? It's no wonder they pity us — the hardest heart must melt sometimes."

"As to myself," said I, for there was no use in attempting to reason with him further, "my every wish is with the cause as warmly as on the day we parted; but I look to France —"

"Ay, and why not? I remember the time your eye flashed and your cheek grew another colour when you spoke of that"

"Yes, Darby," said I, after a pause, "and I had not been here now, but that the only means I possessed of forwarding myself in the French service are unfortunately lost to me."

"And what was that?" interrupted he eagerly.

"Some letters which the poor Captain de Meudon gave me," said I, endeavouring to seem as much at ease as I could. Darby stooped down as I spoke, and

ripping open the lining of his cloak, produced a small parcel fastened with a cord saying —

“Are these what you mean?”

I opened it with a trembling hand, and, to my inexpressible delight, discovered Charles's letter to the head of the *école militaire*, together with a letter of credit, and two checks on his banker. The note to his sister was not, however, among them.

“How came you by these, Darby?” inquired I, eagerly.

“I found them on the road Barton travelled the same evening you made your escape from the yeomanry — you remember that — they were soon missed, and an orderly was sent back to search for them. Since that I've kept them by me, and it was only yesterday that I thought of bringing them to you, thinking you might know something about them.”

“There's a mark on this one,” said I, still gazing on the paper in my hand — “it looks like blood.”

“If it is, it's mine then,” said Darby, doggedly, and after a pause he continued — “the soldier galloped up the very minute I was stooping for the papers; he called out to me to give them up, but I pretended not to hear, and took a long look round to see what way I could escape where his horse couldn't follow me; but he saw what I was at, and the same instant his sabre was in my shoulder, and the blood running hot down my arm — I fell on my knees, but if I did, I took this from my breast,” here he drew forth a long-barrelled rusty pistol, “and shot him through the neck.”

“Was he killed?” said I, in horror at the coolness of the recital.

“Sorrow one o’ me knows. — He fell on his horse’s mane, and I saw the beast gallop with him up the road with his arms hanging at each side of the neck; and then I heard a crash, and I saw that he was down, and the horse was dragging him by the stirrup; but the dust soon hid him from my sight, and indeed I was growing weak too, so I crept into the bushes until it was dark, and then got down to Glencree.”

The easy indifference with which he spoke, the tone of coolness in which he narrated this circumstance, thrilled through me far more painfully than the most passionate description; and I stood gazing on him with a feeling of dread, that unhappily my features but too plainly indicated. He seemed to know what was passing in my mind, and, as if stung by what he deemed my ingratitude for the service he rendered me, his face grew darkly red, the swollen veins stood out thick and knotted in his forehead, his livid lips quivered, and he said in a thick guttural voice —

“Maybe ye think I murdered him?” And then as I made no answer, he resumed in a different tone — “And, faix, ye warn’t long larnin’ their lessons. But hear me now — there never was a traitor to the cause had a happy life, or an easy death; there never was one betrayed us, but we were revenged on him or his. I don’t think ye’re come to *that* yet; for if I did, by the mortal —” As he pronounced the last word, in a tone of the fiercest menace, the sounds of many voices talking without, and the noise of a key turning in the lock, broke in upon our colloquy; and Darby had barely time to resume his disguise when Bubbleton entered, followed by three of his brother officers, all speaking

together, and in accents that evidently betokened their having drank somewhat freely.

"I tell you, again and again, the diamond wins it; but here we are," cried Bubbleton, "and now for a pack of cards, and let's decide the thing at once."

"You said you'd bet fifty, I think," drawled out Crofts, who was unquestionably the most sober of the party — "but what have we here?" At this instant his eye fell upon Darby, who had quietly ensconced himself behind the door, and hoped to escape unseen. "Eh — what's this, I say?"

"What!" cried Bubbleton, "what do I see; a nymph with bright and flowing hair — a hag like Hecuba, by Jove! Tom Burke, my man, how comes the damsel here?"

"'T is Kitty, ould Kitty Cole, your honour. The young gentleman was buying a ballad from me, the heavens prosper him," said Darby.

"Nothing treasonous, I hope — no disloyal effusion Tom — no scandal about Queen Elizabeth, my boy — eh?"

"Come, old lady," said Cradock, "let's have the latest novelty of the Liberty."

"Yes," said Bubbleton, "strike the harp in praise of — confound the word."

"Hang the old crone," broke in Hilliard: "here are the cards. The game stands thus: — a spade is led — you've got none — hearts are trumps."

"No, you mistake, the diamond's the trump," said Cradock.

"I cry halt," said Crofts, holding up both his hands; "the first thing is, what's the bet?"

"Any thing you like," cried Bubbleton, "fifty — a hundred — five hundred."

"Be it then five hundred; I take you," said Crofts, coolly, taking a memorandum-book from his pocket.

"No, no," interposed Hilliard, "Bubbleton, you shan't do any such thing; five — ten — twenty, if you wish, but I'll not stand by at such a wager."

"Well, then, if twenty be as much as you have got permission to bet," replied Crofts, insolently, "there's *my* stake;" so saying, he threw a note on the table, and looked over at Bubbleton, as if awaiting his doing the same.

I saw my poor friend's embarrassment, and, without stirring from my place, slipped a note into his hand in silence; a squeeze of his fingers replied to me, and the same instant he threw the crumpled piece of paper down, and cried out, "Now for it — decide the point."

Crofts at once drew his chair to the table, and began with the utmost coolness to arrange the cards; while the others, deeply interested in the point at issue, looked on without speaking. I thought this a good opportunity for Darby to effect his escape, and, raising my hand noiselessly, I pointed to the door. Darby, who had been only waiting for the fortunate moment, stole quietly towards it; but, while his hand was on the lock, Crofts lifted his eyes towards me, and then throwing them half round, intimated at once that he observed the manœuvre. The blood suffused my face and temples, and though I saw the door close behind the piper, I could not recover from my embarrassment, or the fear that pressed on me, lest Crofts should have penetrated the secret of Darby's disguise, and augured from the fact something to my discredit.

"The game is now arranged," said he. "The spade

being led here, the second player follows suit, the third having none — trump's the card, and is overtrumped by the last in play; the trick is lost, therefore, and, with it, the game."

"No, no," interrupted Bubbleton, "you mistake altogether; the diamond — no, the heart; I mean the — the — what the deuce is it? I say, Cradock, I had it all correct a minute ago — how is it, old fellow?"

"Why you've lost, that's all," said the other, as he looked intently on the table, and seemed to consider the point.

"Yes, Bubbleton, there's no doubt about it — you've lost — we forgot all about the last player," said Hilliard.

A violent knocking at the outer door drowned the voices of all within, while a gruff voice shouted out —

"Captain Bubbleton, the grand round is coming up Parliament-street."

Bubbleton snatched up his sword, and dashing through the room, was followed by the others in a roar of laughter. Crofts alone remaining behind, proceeded leisurely to open the folded piece of bank paper that lay before him, while I stood opposite unable to take my eyes from him. Slowly unfolding the note, he flattened it with his hand, and then proceeded to read aloud — "*Payez au porteur la somme de deux mille livres —*"

"I beg pardon," interrupted I, "there's a mistake there — that belongs to me."

"I thought as much," replied Crofts, with a very peculiar smile — "I scarcely supposed my friend Bubbleton had gone so far."

"There's the sum, Sir," said I, endeavouring to control my temper, and only eager to regain possession of

what would at once have compromised me, if discovered. "This is what Captain Bubbleton lost — twenty pounds if I mistake not."

"I must entreat your pardon, Sir," said Crofts, folding up the French *billet de banque*. "My wager was not with you, nor can I permit you to pay it. This is at present *my* property, and remains so until Captain Bubbleton demands it of me."

I was struck dumb by the manner in which these words were spoken. It was clear to me, that not only he suspected the disguise of the ballad-singer, but that by the discovery of the French note he connected his presence with its being in my possession. Rousing myself for the effort, I said — "You force me, Sir, to speak of what nothing short of the circumstance could have induced me to allude to. It was I gave Captain Bubbleton that note. I gave it in a mistake, for this one."

"I guessed as much, Sir," was the cool answer of Crofts, as he placed the note in his pocket-book and clasped it; "but I cannot permit your candid explanation to alter the determination I have already come to — even had I not the stronger motive, which as an officer in his majesty's pay I possess, to inform the government on such infallible evidence, how deeply interested our French neighbours are in our welfare when they supply us with a commodity, which report says is scarce enough among themselves."

"Do not suppose, Sir, that your threat — for as such I understand it — has any terror for me: there is, it's true, another whose safety might be compromised by any step you might take in this affair; but when I tell you, that it is one who never did, never could have

injured you, and moreover, that nothing treasonous or disloyal lies beneath your discovery —”

“You are really taking a vast deal of trouble, Mr. Burke,” said he, stopping me with a cold smile; “which I am forced to say is unnecessary. Your explanation of how this *billet de banque* came into your possession may be required elsewhere, and will, I am certain, meet with every respect and attention. As for me, an humble captain, with only one principle to sustain me, one clue to guide me in what I am disposed to consider a question of some importance, I shall certainly ask advice of others better able to direct me.”

“You refuse, then, Sir, to restore me what I have assured you is mine?”

“And what I have no doubt whatever you are correct in calling so,” added he, contemptuously.

“And you persist in the refusal?” said I, in a voice which unhappily betrayed more temper than I had yet shown.

“Even so, Sir,” said he, moving towards the door.

“In that case,” said I, springing before him, and setting my back against it, “you don’t leave this room until, in the presence of a third party, I care not who he be, I have told you somewhat more of my opinion of you than it is necessary I should say now.” The insulting expression of Croft’s features changed suddenly as I spoke, the colour left his cheek, and he became as pale as death; his eye wandered round the room with an uncertain look, and then was fixed steadfastly on the door, against which I stood firmly planted. At length his face recovered its wonted character, and he said in a cool, distinct manner —

“Your difficulties have made you bold, Sir.”

"Not more bold than you'll find me whenever you think fit to call on me; but perhaps I am wrong for suggesting a test, which report at least says Captain Crofts has little predilection for."

"Insolent cub," said he, half drawing his sword from the scabbard, and as hastily replacing it when he perceived that I never moved a muscle in my defence, but stood as if inviting his attack. "Let me pass, Sir," cried he, impetuously — "stand by this instant."

I made no reply, but crossing my arms on my breast stared at him firmly as before; he had now advanced within a foot of me, his face purple with passion and his hands trembling with rage.

"Let me pass, I say," shouted he, in an accent that boded his passion had completely got the ascendant, at the same instant he seized me by the collar, and, fixing his grip firmly in my clothes, prepared to hurl me from the spot. The moment had now come that for some minutes past I had been expecting, and with my open hand I struck him on the cheek, but so powerfully, that he reeled back with the stroke. A yell of rage burst from him, and in an instant his sword leaped from the scabbard, and he darted fiercely at me. I sprung to one side, and the weapon pierced the door and broke off short; still more than half the blade remained; and with this he flew towards me. One quick glance I gave to look for something which might serve to arm me — and the same moment the sharp steel pierced my side, and I fell backwards with the shock, carrying my antagonist along with me. The struggle was now a dreadful one; for while he endeavoured to withdraw the weapon from the wound, my hands were on his throat, and in his strained eyeballs and livid colour might be

seen that a few seconds more must decide the contest: a sharp pang shot through me, just then a hot gush of warm blood ran down my side, and I saw above me the shining steel, which he was gradually shortening in his hand, before he ventured to strike — a wild cry broke from me, while at the instant with a crash, the door of the room fell forward, torn from its hinges; a heavy foot approached, and the blow of a strong arm felled Crofts to the earth, where he lay stunned and senseless. In a second I was on my feet; my senses were reeling and uncertain, but I could see that it was Darby who came to my rescue, and who was now binding a sash round my wound to staunch the blood.

“Now for it — life or death’s on it now,” said he, in a low, but distinct whisper; “wipe the blood from your face, and be calm as you can when you’re passing the sentry.”

“Is he —” I dared not speak the word as I looked on the still motionless body that lay before me. Darby raised one arm, and as he let it go, it fell heavily on the ground; he stooped down and, placing his lips near the mouth, endeavoured to ascertain if he breathed, and then jumping to his feet he seized my arm, and in a tone I shall never forget, he said — “It’s over now.”

I tottered back as he spoke; the horrible thought of murder — the frightful sense of crime — the heaviest, the blackest that can stain the heart of man — stunned me: my senses reeled, and as I looked on that corpse stretched at my feet, I would have suffered my every bone to be broken on the rack, to see one quiver of life animate its rigid members. Meanwhile, Darby was kneeling down, and seemed to search for something beside the body.

"All right — come now," said he, "we must be far from this before day-break; and it's lucky if we've the means to do it." I moved onward like one walking in a dream, when horrible images surround him, and dreadful thoughts are ever crowding fast; but where, amid all, some glimmering sense of hope sustains him, and he half feels that the terrors will pass away, and his soul be calm and tranquil once more. What is it? What has happened? was the ever rising question, as I heard Darby groping his way along the dark gallery, and the darker stairs.

"Be steady now," said he, in a whisper, "we're at the gate."

"Who comes there?" cried the sentry.

"A friend," said Darby, in a feigned voice, answering for me, while he dropped behind me. The heavy bolts were withdrawn, and I felt the cold air of the streets on my cheek. "Where to, now?" said I, with a dreamy consciousness that some place of safety must be sought, without well knowing why or wherefore.

"Lean on me, and don't speak," said Darby. "If you can walk as far as the end of the Quay we're all safe." I walked on without further questioning, and almost without thought; and though, from time to time, Darby spoke to several persons as we passed, I heard not what they said, nor took any notice of them.

CHAPTER XX.

The flight.

"ARE ye getting weak?" said Darby, as I staggered heavily against him, and gasped twice or thrice for breath. "Are ye bleeding still?" was his next question, while he passed his hand gently within the sash, and

felt my wound. I endeavoured to mutter something in reply, to which he paid no attention — but, stooping down, he threw me across his shoulder, and darting off at a more rapid pace than before, he left the more frequented thoroughfare, and entered a narrow and gloomy alley, unlighted by a single lamp. As he hurried onward he stopped more than once, as in quest of some particular spot, but which in the darkness he was unable to detect. “Oh! Holy Mother!” he muttered, “the blood is soaking through me! Master Tom, dear — Master Tom, my darlin’, speak to me — speak to me, acushla!” But though I heard each word distinctly, I could not utter one — a dreamy stupor was over me, and I only wished to be left quiet. “This must be it — ay, here it is,” said Darby, as he laid me gently down on the stone sill of the door, and knocked loudly with his knuckles. The summons, though repeated three or four times, was unheeded — and although he knocked loudly enough to have alarmed the neighbourhood, and called out at the top of his voice, no one came — and the only sounds we could hear were the distant cadences of a drinking song, mingled with wild shouts of laughter, and still wilder cries of agony and woe.

“Here they are, at last,” said Darby, as he almost staved in the door with a heavy stone.

“Who’s there?” cried a harsh and feeble voice from within.

“’Tis me, Molly — ’tis Darby M’Keown. Open quick, for the love of heaven — here’s a young gentleman bleedin’ to death on the steps.”

“Ugh! there’s as good as ever he was, and going as fast too, here within,” said the crone. “Ye must

take him away — he wouldn't mind him now for a king's ransom."

"I'll break open the door this minit," said Darby, with a horrible oath, "av ye don't open it."

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed the hag. "If ye wor Darby M'Keown ye'd know well how easy that is — try it — try it, acushla! oak timber and nails is able to bear all you'll do!"

"See, now," said Darby, dropping his voice to a whisper — "see, Molly, here's five goold guineas for ye, av ye'll let us in — 'tis a man's life's on it, and one I'd give my own for twice over."

"Av ye offered me forty," replied she, "I darn't do it. Ye don't know the sorrow that's here this night. 'Tis Dan Fortescue is going. I'm coming, I'm coming," muttered she to some call from within, and then, without waiting to hear more, she shuffled back along the passage, and left us once more alone.

"There's nothing for it but this now," said Darby, as retiring a few paces, he dashed his shoulder against the door with all his force; but, though a powerful man, and though every window rattled and trembled with the tremendous shock, the strong panels withstood the stroke, and never yielded in the least. "Tis no use, firing through the lock," said he, in a tone of despair. "Blessed Joseph, what's to be done?"

As he spoke, the light tread of a bare-footed child was heard coming up the lane, and the same moment a little girl approached the door, she carried a cup in her hand, and held it carefully, as if fearful of spilling its contents: as she neared the door, she seemed uncertain how to proceed, and at last, as if gaining courage, tapped twice at it with her knuckles.

"Don't ye know me, Nora?" said Darby; "don't ye know Darby the Blast?"

"Ah! Mister M'Keown, is this you? Ah! I'm afeard it's little use there is in coming here to-night. Mr. Fortescue's dying within, and Doctor Kenagh can't leave him. I'm bringing him this to take, but —"

"Nora, dear," said Darby, "I've a secret for Mr. Fortescue, and must see him before he dies. Here's a crown my darlin', and don't tell any one I gave it to ye." Here he stooped down, and whispered rapidly some words in her ear.

"Who's there?" broke in the hag's voice from within.

"'Tis me, Nora," said the child boldly.

"Are ye alone there — do ye see any one about the door?"

"Sorra one; can't you let me in out of the cowld."

"Come in quick, then," said the crone, as she opened the door carefully, and only wide enough to let the child pass — but the same instant Darby dashed forward his foot, and flinging the door full wide, seized me by the collar and dragged me in, after him, closing the door at once behind him. The screams of the hag, though loud and vehement, were as unheeded as were Darby's own efforts to attract notice half an hour before.

"Be quiet, I say — hush yer crying, or, be the sowl o' the man that's dyin', I'll dhrive a ball through ye." The sight of a pistol-barrel seemed at last to have its effect, and she contented herself with a low wailing kind of noise, as she tottered after us along the passage.

The cold air of the street, and the rest combined,

had given me strength, and I was able to follow Darby, as he led the way through many a passage, and up more than one stair.

"Here it is," said the child, in a whisper, as she stopped at the door of a room which lay half ajar.

We halted in silence, and listened to the breathings of a man, whose short, sobbing respiration, broken by hiccup, denoted the near approach of death.

"Go on," cried a deep low voice in a tone of eagerness; "ye'll not have the cough now for some time."

The sick man made no reply, but his hurried breathing seemed to show that he was making some unwonted effort; at last he spoke, but in a voice so faint and husky, we could not hear the words. The other, however, appeared to listen, and, by a stray monosyllable dropped at intervals, to follow the tenor of his speech. At last the sound ceased, and all was still.

"Go in now," said Darby, in a whisper to the child, "I'll follow you."

The little girl gently pushed the door and entered, followed by M'Keown, who, however, only advanced one foot within the room, as if doubting what reception he should meet with.

By the uncertain light of a wood fire, which threw in fitful flashes its glare around, I perceived that a sick man lay on a mean-looking miserable bed in one corner of a dark room; beside him, seated on a low stool, sat another, his head bent down to catch the low breathings which the dying man gave forth from time to time. The heavy snoring sound of others asleep directed my eyes to a distant part of the chamber, where I saw three fellows lying on the floor,

partly covered by a blanket. I had barely time to see this much, when the figure beside the bed sprang forward, and in a low but menacing tone addressed M'Keown. The last words only could I catch, as he said —

“And if he wakes up he may know you still.”

“And if he does,” said Darby, doggedly, “who cares. Isn't there as good blood as his shed for the cause? Look here.”

He dragged me forward as he spoke, and, tearing open my coat, pointed to the sash that was now saturated with the blood that flowed at every stir from my wound. The other looked fixedly at me for a second or two, took my hand within his, and, letting it fall heavily, he whispered a word to M'Keown, and turned away.

“No, no,” cried Darby, violently: “by the holy mass! ye'll not trate me that way. Sit down, Master Tom,” said he, as he forced me into an old arm-chair beside the fire. “Here, take a drink of water. Come here, doctor; come here, now, stop the bleeding; stand by me this wonst, and by this —” Here he crossed his fingers before him and looked fervently upwards; but at this instant the sick man sprang up in his bed, and looked wildly about him.

“Isn't that Darby — isn't that M'Keown there?” cried he, as he pointed with his finger. “Darby,” he continued, in a low clear whisper, “Darby, see here, my boy; you often said I'd do nothing for the cause. Is this nothing?” He threw back the bed-clothes as he spoke, and disclosed a ghastly wound that divided his chest, exposing the cartilage of the ribs, which stood out amid the welling blood that oozed forth

with every respiration he made. "Is it nothing that I gave up rank, and place, and fortune, the broad acres that were in my family for three centuries — all my hopes, all my prospects —"

"And if you did," interrupted M'Keown, hastily, "you knew what for."

"I knew what for!" repeated the sick man, as a deadly smile played upon his livid face and curled his white lip; "I know it now, at least — to leave my inheritance to a bastard — to brand my name with disgrace and dishonour — to go down to the grave a traitor, and worse still —" He shuddered violently here, and though his mouth moved, no sound came forth, he sank back, worn out and exhausted.

"Was he *there*," said Darby to the doctor, with a significant emphasis on the word — "was he *there* to-night?"

"He was," replied the other. "He thinks, too, he fired the shot that did it; but, poor fellow! he was down before that. The boys brought him off. — That child is going fast," continued he, as his eye fell upon me.

"Look to him, then, and don't be losin' time," said Darby, fiercely; "look to him," he added more mildly, "and the heavens will bless ye. Here's twenty goolden guineas — it's all I saved these eight years — here they're for you, and save his life."

The old man knelt down beside me, and slipping a scissors within the scarf that lay fastened to my side with clotted blood, he proceeded to open and expose the situation of my wound. A cold sick feeling — a kind of half fainting sensation followed this, and I could hear nothing of the dialogue that passed so near

me. An occasional sting of pain shot through me as the dressing proceeded; but, save this, I had little consciousness of any thing. At length, like one awaking from a heavy slumber, with faculties half clouded by the dreamy past, I looked around me — all was still and motionless in the room. The doctor sat beside the sick man's bed, and Darby, his eyes rivetted on me, knelt close to my chair, and held his hand upon the bandage over my wound. A gentle tap here came to the door, and the child I had seen before entered noiselessly; and, approaching the doctor, said —

“The car is come, Sir.”

The old man nodded in silence, and then turning towards Darby he whispered something in his ear. M'Keown sprung to his legs at once, his cheek flushed deeply, and his eyes sparkled with animation.

“I have it, I have it!” cried he — “there never was such luck for us before.”

With that he drew the old man to one side, and speaking to him in a low, but rapid tone, evinced by the violence of his gesture, and the tremulous eagerness of his voice, how deeply he was interested.

“True enough! true enough!” said the old man, after a pause. “Poor Dan has but one more journey before him.”

“Is he able to bear it, doctor?” said Darby, pointing towards me with his finger; “that's all I ask. Has he the strength in him?”

“He'll do now,” replied the other gruffly: “there's little harm done him this time. Let him taste that, whenever you find him growing weak, and keep his head low, and there's no fear of him.” As he spoke, he took from a cupboard in the wall a small vial,

which he handed to M'Keown, who received the precious elixir with as much reverence as though it contained the very well-spring of human existence.

"And now," said Darby, "the less time lost the better. It will soon be daylight on us. Master Tom, can you rise, acushla? Are you able to stand up?"

I made the effort as well as I could, but my limbs seemed chained down, and even my arm felt like lead beside me.

"Take him on your back," said the old man, hurriedly. "You'll stay here till sunrise. Take him down stairs on your back, and when you have him in the open air, turn him towards the wind, and keep his head low — mind that."

I made another attempt to stand up, but before I could effect it, Darby's strong arms were round my waist, and I felt myself lifted on his shoulder, and borne from the room; a muttered good-by passed between the others, and Darby began to descend the stair cautiously, while the little child went before with a candle. As the street-door was opened, I could perceive that a car and horse stood in waiting, accompanied by two men, who — the moment they saw me — sprang forward to Darby's assistance, and helped to place me on the car. M'Keown was soon beside me, and supporting my head upon his shoulder, he contrived to hold me in a leaning position, giving me at the same time the full benefit of the fresh breeze, which already refreshed and restored me. The vehicle now moved on in darkness and in silence; at first our pace was slow, but it gradually quickened as we passed along the quay, for as such I recognised it by the dull sound of the river near us. The bright lamps

of the greater thoroughfare soon made their appearance, and as we traversed these, I could mark that our pace slackened to a walk, and that we kept the very middle of the wide street as if to avoid observation. Gradually we emerged from this, and, as I heard by the roll of the wheels, reached the outskirts of the town. We had not been many minutes there when the horse was put to his speed, and the car whirled along at a tremendous rate. Excepting a sense of weight and stiffness in the side, I had no painful feeling from my wound, while the rapidity with which we passed through the air, imparted a sensation of drowsiness, far from unpleasant. In this state I scarcely was conscious of what passed about me. Now and then some occasional halt, some chance interruption, would momentarily arouse me, and I could faintly hear the sound of voices, but of what they spoke I knew nothing. Darby frequently questioned me, but my utmost effort at reply was to press his hand. By times it would seem to me, as though all I felt were but the fancies of some sick dream, which the morning should dispel and scatter. Then I thought that we were flying from an enemy, who pressed hotly on us, and gained at every stride; a vague shadowy sense of some horrible event mingling with all, and weighing heavily on my heart.

As the time wore on, my senses became clearer, and I saw that we were travelling along the sea-side. The faint grey light of breaking day shed a cold gleam across the green water, which plashed with a mournful cadence on the low flat shore: I watched the waves as they beat with a heavy sough amid the scattered weeds, where the wild cry of the curlew mingled with

the sound as he skimmed along the gloomy water, and my heart grew heavier. There is something, I know not what, terribly in unison with our saddest thoughts in the dull splash of the sea at night — the loudest thunders of the storm, when white-crested waves rise high, and break in ten thousand eddies on the dark rocks, are not so suggestive of melancholy as the sighing moan of the midnight tide. Long-buried griefs, long-forgotten sorrows, rise up as we listen, and we feel as though that wailing cry were the funeral chant over cherished hopes and treasured aspirations. From my dark musings I was roused suddenly by Darby's voice, asking of the men who sat at the opposite side, "how the wind was?"

"Westing by south," replied one, "as fair as need be, if there was enough of it — but who knows, we may have a cap-full yet, when the sun gets up."

"We'll not have long to wait for that," cried the other — "see there."

I lifted my eyes as he spoke, and beheld the pink stain of coming day rising above the top of a large mountain.

"That's Howth," said Darby, "seizing with eagerness the proof of my returning senses."

"Come, press on, as fast as you can," said one of the men, "we must catch the ebb, or we'll never do it."

"Where does she lie?" said Darby, in a low whisper.

"Under the cliffs, in Bolskaton bay," said the last speaker, whom I now perceived by his dress and language to be a sailor.

My curiosity was now excited to the utmost to know whither we were bound, and with an effort I

articulated the one word, "where?" Darby's eyes brightened as I spoke, he pressed my hand firmly within his, but made me no reply. Attributing his silence to caution, I pressed him no further — and, indeed, already my former indifference came back on me, and I felt listless as before.

"Turn off there to the right," cried the sailor to the driver, and suddenly we left the high-road, and entered a narrow by-way, which seemed to lead along the side of the mountain close to the water's edge — before we had proceeded far in this direction, a long low whistle was heard from a distance.

"Stop there, stop," said the sailor, as he knelt upon the car, and replied to the signal. "Ay, all right, there they are," said he, as pointing to a little creek between the rocks below us, we saw a small row-boat with six men lying on their oars.

"Can't he walk," said the sailor in a half whisper, as he stood beside the car. "Well, let's lose no more time, we'll take him down between us."

"No, no," said Darby, "put him on my back, I'll do it myself."

"The ground's slippier than you take it," said the other, "my way's the safest."

With that, he lifted me from the car, and placing me between Darby and himself, they grasped each other's hands beneath me, and soon began a descent, which I saw would have been perfectly impracticable for one man to have accomplished with another on his back.

During the time, my desire to know where they were bringing me again grew stronger than ever — and as I turned to ask Darby, I perceived that the tears

were coursing each other fast down his weather-beaten cheeks, while his lips shook and trembled like one in an ague.

"Mind your footing there, my man, I say," cried the sailor, "or you'll have us over the cliff."

"Round the rock to the left there," cried a voice from below — "that's it, that's it — now you're all right; steady there; give me your hand."

As he spoke, two men advanced from the boat, and assisted us down the sloping beach, where the wet seaweed made every step a matter of difficulty.

"Lay him in the stern there — gently, lads, gently," said the voice of one who appeared the chief amongst them — "that's it, throw those jackets under his head. I say, piper, ar'n't you coming with us?"

But Darby could not speak one word. A livid pallor was over his features, and the tears fell, drop by drop, upon his cheek.

"Master Tom," said he, at length, as his lips almost touched me — "my child, my heart's blood, you won't forget poor Darby. Ye'll be a great man yet — ye'll be all I wish ye: but will ye remember a poor man like me?"

"Jump ashore there, my good fellow," cried the cockswain — "we'll have enough to do to round the point before the tide ebbs."

"One minit more, and God love ye for it," said Darby, in a voice of imploring accent — "who knows will we ever meet again. 'T is the last time, maybe, I'll ever look on him."

I could but press his hand to my heart; for my agitation increased the debility I felt, and every effort to speak was in vain.

"One half minit more — if it's only that he'll be able to say, 'God bless you, Darby,' and I'll be happy."

"Push off, my lads," shouted the sailor, sternly; and as he spoke the oars plashed heavily in the sea, and the boat rocked over with the impulse. Twice the strong stroke of the oars sent the craft through the clear water, when the piper clasped his arm wildly around me, and kissing me on the cheek, he sprang over the side. The waves were nearly to his shoulders; but in a few seconds he had buffeted through them, and stood upon the shore. With a last effort I waved my hand in adieu; and as I sank back exhausted, I heard a wild cry burst from him, half in triumph, half in despair. One glance more I caught of his figure as we stood out to sea; he was kneeling on the beach, bareheaded, and as if in prayer. The tears gushed from my eyes as I beheld him, and the long pent-up sorrow at last broke forth, and I sobbed like a child.

"Come, come, my lad, don't feel down-hearted," said the sailor, laying his hand on my shoulder. "The world can scarce have been over rough to one so young as you are. Lift up your head and see what a glorious morning we've got; and there comes the breeze over the water. We hadn't such weather the last time we made this trip, I assure you."

I looked up suddenly, and truly never did such a scene of loveliness meet my eyes. The sun had risen in all his glorious brilliancy, and poured a flood of golden light across the bay, tipping with a violet hue the far-off peaks of the Wicklow mountains, and lighting up the wooded valleys at their feet. Close above us rose the rugged sides of Howth in dark shadow, the frowning rocks and gloomy caverns contrasting with

the glittering tints of the opposite coast, where every cottage and cliff sparkled in the dancing sunlight. As we rounded the point, a cheer broke from the men, and was answered at once. I turned my head, and saw beneath the tall cliffs the taper spars of a small vessel, from which the sails hung listlessly, half brailed to the mast.

"There she lies," said the skipper — "that's the 'Saucy Sal,' my master; and if you're any judge of a craft, I think you'll like her. Give way, lads, give way; when that rock yonder's covered, the tide is at the flood."

The boat sprang to the strong jerk of their brawny arms, and in a few minutes glided into the little creek where the "Saucy Sal" lay at anchor.

Lifting me up, they placed me on board the little vessel, while, without losing a moment, they proceeded to ship the anchor and shake out the canvas. In less than five minutes the white sails bent to the breeze; the water rustled at the prow, and we stood out to sea.

"Where to?" said I in a faint whisper to the sailor who held the tiller beside me.

"Down channel, Sir."

"And then?" asked I once more; "and then?"

"That must depend on the revenue cruisers, I believe," said he more gruffly, and evidently indisposed to further questioning.

Alas, I had too little interest in life to care for where, and laying my head upon my arm fell into a heavy stupor for several hours.

The hot sun, the breeze, the unaccustomed motion, and worse than all the copious libations of brandy and

water I was forced from time to time to take, gradually brought on fever, and before evening a burning thirst and throbbing headache seized me, and my senses, that hitherto had been but lethargic, became painfully acute, and my reason began to wander. In this state I remained for days, totally unconscious of the flight of time; frightful images of the past pursuing each other through my heated brain, and torturing me with horrors unspeakable. It was in one of my violent paroxysms I tore the bandage from my side, and re-opening my half-healed wound became in a moment deluged with blood. I have no memory of aught that followed; the debility of almost death itself succeeded, and I lay without sense or motion. To this circumstance I owed my life, for when I next rallied, the fever had left me, my senses were unclouded, my cheek no longer burned, nor did my temples throb, and as the sea-breeze played across my face I drank it in with ecstasy, and felt once more the glorious sensations of returning health. It was evening, the faint wind that follows sun-set scarce filled the sails as we glided along through the waveless sea; I had been listening to the low monotonous song of one of the sailors as he sat mending a sail beside me, when suddenly I heard a voice hail us from the water; the skipper jumped on the half-deck and immediately replied — the words I could not hear, but by the stir and movement about me I saw something unusual had occurred, and by an effort I raised my head above the bulwark and looked about me. A long low craft lay close alongside us, filled with men whose blue caps and striped shirts struck me as strange and uncommon, not less than their black belts and cutlasses with

which every man was armed. After an interchange of friendly greetings with our crew, for as such they seemed, although I could not catch the words, she moved rapidly past us —

“There’s their flotilla, Sir,” said the helmsman, as he watched my eye while it wandered over the water.

I crept up higher, and followed the direction of his finger. Never shall I forget that moment; before me, scarce as it seemed a mile distant, lay a thousand boats at anchor, beneath the shadow of tall sand-hills, decorated with gay and gaudy pennons, crowded with figures whose bright colours and glittering arms shone gorgeously in the setting sunlight. The bright waves reflected the myriad tints, while they seemed to plash in unison with the rich swell of martial music that stole along the water with every freshening breeze. The shore was covered with tents, some of them surmounted with large banners that floated out gaily to the breeze; and far as the eye could reach were hosts of armed men dotted over the wide plain beside the sea. Vast columns of infantry were there — cavalry and artillery too — their bright arms glittering and their gay plumes waving, but all still and motionless, as if spell-bound. As I looked, I could see horsemen gallop from the dense squares, and riding hurriedly to and fro. Suddenly, a blue rocket shot into the calm sky, and broke in a million glittering fragments over the camp; the deep roar of a cannon boomed out, and then the music of a thousand bands swelled high and full, and in an instant the whole plain was in motion, and the turf trembled beneath the tramp of marching men. Regiment followed regiment, squadron poured

after squadron, as they descended the paths towards the beach, while a long dark line wound through the glittering mass, and marked the train of the artillery, as with caissons and ammunition-wagons they moved silently over the grassy surface.

All that I had ever conceived of warlike preparation was as nothing to the gorgeous spectacle before me. The stillness of the evening air, made tremulous with the clang of trumpets and the hoarse roar of drums — the mirror-like sea, coloured with the reflection of bright banners and waving pennants — and then, the simultaneous step of the mighty army, so filled up every sense that I feared lest all might prove the mere pageant of a dream, and vanish as it came.

“What a glorious sight!” cried I, at length, half wild with enthusiasm. “Where are we?”

“Where are we!” repeated the skipper, smiling. “Look out, and you’ll soon guess that. Are those very like the uniforms of King George? When did you see steel breast-plates and helmets before? This is France, my lad.”

“France! France!” said I, stupified with the mere thought.

“Yes, to be sure. That’s the army of England, as they call it, you see yonder; they are practising the embarkation. See the red rockets; there they go — three, four, five, six — that’s the signal: in less than half an hour thirty thousand men will be ready to embark. Mark how they press on faster and faster; and watch the cavalry, as they dismount and lead their horses down the steep: see how the boats pull in shore — but, holloa there; we shall get foul of the gun-boats —

already we've run in too close. Down helm, my lad; keep the head-land yonder on your lee."

As he spoke, the light craft bent over to the breeze, and skipped freely over the blue water. Each moment wafted us farther away from the bright scene, and soon a projecting point shut out the whole, save the swell of the brass bands as it floated on the breeze, and I might have believed it a mere delusion.

"They practise that manœuvre often enough to know it well," said the skipper: "sometimes at day-break — now at noon-day — and again, as we see, at sunset; and no one knows at what moment the attack that seems a feint may not turn out to be real. But here we are now alongside: our voyage is ended."

The anchor plashed from our bow, while a signal was made from the shore and answered by us; and in an instant we were surrounded with boats.

"Ha, Antoine!" cried a *sous* officer in a naval uniform, who sat on the gunwale of a long eight-oar gig, and touched his hat in recognition of our skipper. "What news '*outré mer*?' what are we doing in Ireland?"

"My young friend here must tell you that," replied the skipper, laughingly, as he laid his hand on my shoulder. "Let me present him to you — Mr. Burke, Lieutenant Brevix."

The lieutenant saluted me politely, and then, springing up, he jumped gaily on board of us, and shook our hands with great appearance of cordiality.

"They'll want to see you ashore, Antoine, as soon as may be: there are despatches going off to-night for Paris, and they'll be glad to send the last accounts of the state of the channel."

"Light winds and no cruisers are all I have to tell them, then," said the skipper.

The lieutenant now took him aside, and they conversed for some time in a low tone, during which I occupied myself by watching the sentinels who paraded incessantly to and fro along a low wooden pier that stretched out into the sea, and formed, with a promontory at some distance, a small harbour. Their watch seemed of the most vigilant, if I might judge from the low, but continued cry which passed from mouth to mouth, of "*Sentinelle, prenez garde à vous;*" while from each boat, across the harbour, a sing-song note chanted in response the monotonous sounds "*bon quart!*" as each quarter of an hour stole past. These precautions against the approach of any strange craft extended, as I afterwards learned, along the entire coast from Dieppe to Ostende; yet were they not sufficient to prevent frequent visits from the English spies, who penetrated into every quarter of the camp, and even had the hardihood to visit the theatre of the town, and express loudly their disapprobation of the performance.

"You'd better come ashore with me, Sir," said the lieutenant — "Colonel Dorsenne will be glad to ask you some questions. What papers have you got?"

"None, save a few private letters," said I, somewhat confused at the question.

"No matter," said he gaily. "I hear from Antoine you wish to join the service here. That wish is your best recommendation to the colonel; he'll not trouble you for your reasons, I warrant you. Conduct monsieur to the quartier-general," said the lieutenant to a corporal, who, with his party of four men, stood awaiting at the landing-place the arrival of any one from the

boats; and in an instant, the men falling to each side of me, took their way along the pier. I could mark as we went that more than once their looks were bent on me with an expression of compassion and pity, which at the time I was at a loss to explain. I knew not then that the road we were taking was that which so often led to death, and that it was only on the very day before, two Englishmen were shot for having ventured on shore without authority.

The *consigne* of the corporal passed us through one post after another, until we reached the open plain, over which now the night was falling fast. A lantern at some distance off marked the quarters of the officer on duty; and thither we directed our steps, and at last reached a small wooden hut, from within which the sounds of mirth and revelry proceeded. The voice of the sentinel who challenged us brought an officer to the door, who, the moment his eyes fell on me, stepped back, and, passing his hand hurriedly across his forehead, muttered half inaudibly, "Another already!"

While he retired into an inner apartment, I had time to look at the singular decorations which adorned the walls of the ante-chamber: around on every side, and arranged like trophies, were grouped the weapons of different arms of the service, surmounted with some device emblematic of their peculiar character, or sometimes the mere record of some famous battle in which they had pre-eminently distinguished themselves. Here were the long, straight swords of the cuirassier crossed above the steel breast-plate, and surmounted by the heavy helmet half hid in leopard skin, and bearing the almost effaced word, "Arcole," in front; there was the short carbine of the voltigeur, over which hung the red

cap and its gay gold tassel, with the embroidered motto, "*en avant*," in gold letters; the long and graceful weapon of the lancer, the curved sabre of the *chasseur-à-cheval*, even the axe of the pioneer was not wanting, displaying at a glance some trail of every branch of the mighty force that bore the proud designation of "*La Grande Armée*."

I was busily engaged inspecting these when the door opened, and an officer in full uniform appeared; his figure was above the middle size, strongly and squarely built, and his bronzed features and high, bold forehead gave him a soldier-like air.

"Your name, Sir," said he quickly, as he drew himself up before me and looked sternly in my face.

"Burke, Thomas Burke."

"Write it down, Auguste," said he, turning to a younger officer who stood, pen in hand, behind him.

"Your rank or profession?"

"*Gentilhomme*," said I, not knowing that the word expressed nobility.

"*Ah, pardieu*," cried he, as he showed his white teeth in a grin. "Produce your papers, if you have any."

"I have nothing save those letters," said I, handing him those of De Meudon.

Scarce had his eye glanced over them, when I saw his colour heighten and his cheek tremble.

"What!" cried he, "are you the same young Irishman who is mentioned here; the constant companion and friend of poor Charles? He was my school-fellow: we were at Brienne together. What a mistake I was about to fall into. How did you come, and when?"

Before I could reply to any of his many questions,

the naval officer I had met at the harbour entered and delivered his report.

"Yes, yes; I know it all," said Dorsenne, hurriedly throwing his eye over it. "It's all right, perfectly right, Brevix. Let Capitaine Antoine be examined at the quartier-general. I'll take care of Monsieur here; and to begin — come and join us at supper."

Passing his arm familiarly over my shoulder, he led me into the adjoining room, where two other officers were seated at a table covered with silver dishes and numerous flasks of wine. A few words sufficed for my introduction, and a few glasses of champagne placed me as thoroughly at my ease as though I had passed my life amongst them, and never heard any other conversation than the last movement of the French army, and their projects for future campaigns.

"And so," said the colonel, after hearing from me a short account of the events which had induced me to turn my eyes to France — "and so you'd be a soldier — *Eh bien*, I see nothing better going myself. There's Davernac will tell you the same, though he has lost his arm in the service."

"*Oui pardieu*," said the officer on my right, "I am not the man to dissuade him from a career I've ever loved."

"*A vous, mon ami*," said the young officer who first addressed me on my arrival, as he held out his glass and clinked it against mine. "I hope we shall have you one of these days as our guide through the dark streets of London. The time may not be so distant as you think. Never shake your head at it."

"It is not that I would mean," said I eagerly.

"What, then?" said the colonel. "You don't suppose such an expedition as ours could fail of success?"

"Nor that either," replied I. "I am not so presumptuous as to form an opinion on the subject."

"*Diantre* then, what is it?"

"Simply this: that whatever fortune awaits me, I shall never be found fighting against the country under whose rule I was born. England may not — alas! she has not been — just to us: but whatever resistance I might have offered in the ranks of my countrymen, I shall never descend to in an invading army. No, no; if France have no other war than with England — if she have not the cause of continental liberty at heart — she'll have no blood of mine shed in her service."

"*Sacristi*," said the colonel, sipping his wine coolly, "you had better keep these same opinions of yours to yourself. There's a certain little general we have at Paris, who rarely permits people to reason about the cause of the campaign. However, it is growing late now, and we'll not discuss the matter at present. Auguste, will you take Burke to your quarters? and tomorrow I'll call on the general about his brevet for the Polytechnique."

I felt now that I had spoken more warmly than was pleasing to the party; but the sentiments I had announced were only such as in my heart I had resolved to abide by, and I was pleased that an opportunity so soon offered to display them. I was glad to find myself at rest at last; and although events pressed on me fast and thick enough to have occupied my mind, no sooner had I laid my head on my pillow, than I fell into a sound sleep.

CHAPTER XXI.

The "Ecole militaire."

LET me now skip over at a bound some twelve months of my life — not that they were to me without their chances and their changes, but they were such as are incidental to all boyhood — and present myself to my reader as the scholar at the "Polytechnique." What a change had the time, short as it was, worked in all my opinions; how completely had I unlearned all the teaching of my early instructor, poor Darby; how had I been taught to think that glory was the real element of war, and that its cause was of far less moment than its conduct.

The enthusiasm which animated every corps of the French army, and was felt through every fibre of the nation, had full sway in the little world of the military school. There, every battle was known and conned over; we called every spot of our play-ground by some name great in the history of glory; and among ourselves we assumed the titles of the heroes who shed such lustre on their country; and thus in all our boyish sports our talk was of the Bridge of Lodi — Arcola — Rivoli — Castiglione — the Pyramids — Mount Tabor. While the names of Kleber, Kellerman, Massena, Desaix; Murat, were adopted amongst us: but one name only remained unappropriated, and no one was bold enough to assume the title of him, whose victories were the boast of every tongue. If this enthusiasm was general amongst us, I felt it in all its fullest force, for it came untinged with any other thought. To *me* there was neither home nor family — my days passed over in one unbroken calm; no thought of pleasure, no hope

of happiness when the *fête* day came round; my every sense was wrapped up in the one great desire — to be a soldier; to have my name known among those great men whose fame was over Europe; to be remembered by him, whose slightest word of praise was honour itself. When should that day come for me? when should I see the career open before me? — these were my earliest waking thoughts, my last at nightfall.

If the intensity of purpose, the strong current of all my hopes, formed for me an ideal and a happy world within me, yet did it lend a trait of seriousness to my manner that seemed like melancholy; and while few knew less what it was to grieve, a certain sadness in me struck my companions, on which they often rallied me, but which I strove in vain to conquer. It was true that at certain times my loneliness and isolation came coldly on my heart; when one by one I saw others claimed by their friends, and hurrying away to some happy home, where some fond sister threw her arm around a brother's neck, or some doating mother clasped her son close to her bosom, and kissed his brow, a tear would find its way down my cheek, and I would hasten to my room, and, locking the door, sit down alone to think, till my sad heart grew weary, or my sterner nature rose within me, and by an effort over myself, I turned to my studies and forgot all else. Meanwhile I made rapid progress; the unbroken tenor of my thoughts gave me a decided advantage over the others, and long before the regular period arrived the day for my final examination was appointed.

What a lasting impression do some passages of early life leave behind them! Even yet, and how many years are past! how well do I remember all the hopes

and fears that stirred my heart as the day drew near; how each morning at sunrise I rose to pore over some of the books which formed the subjects of examination; how when the grey dawn was only breaking have I bent over the pages of Vauban, and the calculations of Carnot, and with what a sinking spirit have I often found that a night seemed to have erased all the fruit of a long day's labour, and that the gain of my hard-worked intellect had escaped me; and then again, like magic, the lost thought would come back, my brain grow clear, and all the indistinct and shadowy conceptions assume a firm and tangible reality, which I felt like power. At such times as these my spirit rose, my heart beat high, a joyous feeling throbbed in every pulse, and an exhilaration almost maddening elevated me, and there was nothing I would not have dared — no danger I would not have confronted. Such were the attractions of my boyish days, and such the temperament they bequeathed to my manhood.

It was on the 16th of June, the anniversary of Marengo, when the drum beat to arms in the court of the Polytechnique, and soon after the scholars were seen assembling in haste from various quarters, anxious to learn if their prayer had been acceded to, which asked permission for them to visit the "Invalides," the usual indulgence on the anniversary of any great victory.

As we flocked into the court we were struck by seeing an orderly dragoon standing beside the headmaster, who was eagerly perusing a letter in his hands; when he had concluded he spoke a few words to the soldier, who at once wheeled round his horse and trotted rapidly from the spot.

Again the drum rolled out, and the order was given to form in line; in an instant the command was obeyed, and we stood in silent expectation of the news which we perceived awaited us.

"*Messieurs les écoliers*," he began, when stillness was restored, "this day being the anniversary of the glorious battle of Marengo, the General Buonaparte has decreed that a review should be held of the entire school. Lieutenant-general d'Auvergne will arrive here at noon to inspect you, and on such reports as I shall give of your general conduct, zeal, and proficiency, will recommendations be forwarded to the first consul for your promotion."

A loud cheer followed this speech. The announcement far surpassed our most ardent hopes, and there was no limit to our enthusiasm; and loud *vivas* in honour of General Buonaparte, d'Auvergne, and the head-master himself, were heard on all sides.

Scarcely was the breakfast over when our preparations began. What a busy scene it was: here, were some brushing up their uniforms, polishing their sword-hilts, and pipeclaying their cross-belts; there, might be seen others conning over the directions of field manœuvres, and refreshing their memory of the words of command; some, practised marching in groups along the corridor; others, too much excited by the prospect before them, jumped madly from place to place, shouting and singing snatches of soldier-songs; but all were occupied. As for me, it was only two days before I had obtained my grade of corporal, my new uniform had only just come home, and I put it on for the first time with no inconsiderable pride, indeed I could scarce turn my eyes, as I walked, from the stripes upon my

arm that denoted my rank. Long before the appointed time we were all assembled, and when the clock struck twelve and the drum beat out, not a boy was absent; we were drawn up in three columns according to our standing, spaces being left between each to permit of our wheeling into line at the word of command. The head-master passed down our ranks, narrowly inspecting our equipments, and scrutinizing every detail of our costume; but a stronger impulse than ordinary was now at work, and not the slightest irregularity was any where detectable. Meanwhile the time passed on, and although every eye was directed to the long avenue of lime trees by which the general must arrive, nothing moved along it; and the bright streaks of sunlight that peeped between the trees were unbroken by any passing shadow. Whispers passed along the ranks, some fearing he might have forgotten the whole appointment, others suspecting that another review elsewhere had engrossed his attention, and at last a half murmur of dissatisfaction crept through the mass, which only the presence of the *chef* restrained within due bounds. One o' clock struck, and yet no rider appeared; the alley remained silent and deserted as before, the minutes now seemed like hours — weariness and lassitude appeared every where. The ranks were broken, and many wandered from their posts, and forgot all discipline. At last a cloud of dust was seen to rise at a distance, and gradually it approached the long avenue; every eye was turned in the direction, and in an instant the stragglers resumed their places, and all was attention and anxiety, while every look pierced eagerly the dense cloud, to see whether it was not the long-wished-for staff which was coming. At length the object burst

upon our sight; but what was our disappointment to see that it was only a travelling carriage with four post-horses that approached; no appearance of a soldier was there, not one solitary dragoon — a half-uttered shout announced our dissatisfaction, for we at once guessed it was merely some chance visitor, or perhaps the friends of some of the scholars, who had thus excited our false hopes.

The *chef* himself participated in our feeling, and passing down the lines he announced, that if the general did not arrive within ten minutes, he would himself dismiss us, and set us at liberty. A cheer of gratitude received this speech, and we stood patiently awaiting our liberation, when suddenly from the guard-house at the gate, the clash of arms was heard, and the roll of drums in salute, and the same instant the carriage we had seen rolled into the court-yard, and took up its station in the middle of the square. The next moment the door was opened and the steps lowered, and an officer in a splendid uniform assisted three ladies to alight. Before we recovered from the surprise of the proceeding, the master had approached the party, and by his air of deference and deep respect, denoted that they were no ordinary visitors; but our attention was quickly drawn from the group that now stood talking and laughing together, for already the clank of a cavalry escort was heard coming up the avenue, and we beheld the waving plumes and brilliant uniform of a general officer's staff advancing at a rapid trot. The drums now rolled out along the lines, we stood to arms — the gallant cortege turned into the court and formed in front of us. All eyes were fixed on the general himself, the perfect *beau ideal* of an old soldier.

He sat his horse as firmly and gracefully as the youngest aid-de-camp of his suite; his long white hair dressed in queue behind, was brushed back off his high broad forehead; his clear blue eye, mild yet resolute, glanced over our ranks, and as he bowed to the head-master, his whole gesture and bearing was worthy of the court of which once he was a brilliant member.

"I have kept my young friends waiting for me," said he, in a low but clear voice, "and it now remains for me to make the only *amende* in my power — a short inspection. Dorsenne, will you take the command?"

I started at the name, and looked round, and close beside stood the same officer who had so kindly received me the day I landed in France; though he looked at me, however, I saw he did not remember me, and my spirits sank again, as I thought how utterly friendless and alone I was.

The general was true to his word, in making the inspection as brief as possible; he rode leisurely down the ranks, stopping from time to time to express his satisfaction, or drop some chance word of encouragement or advice, which we caught up with eagerness and delight. Forming us into line, he ordered his aid-de-camp to put us through some of the ordinary parade manœuvres, which we knew as thoroughly as the most disciplined troops. During all this time, the group of ladies maintained their position in front, and seemed to watch the review with every semblance of interest. The general, too, made one of the party, and appeared from time to time to explain the intended movement, and direct their attention to the scene.

“Let them march past in salute,” said he, at length, “the poor fellows have had enough of it — I must not encroach on the entire holiday.”

A unanimous cheer was the reply to this kind speech, and we formed in sections and marched by him at a quick-step. The *chef d'école* had now approached the staff, and was making his report on the boys, when the general again interrupted him by saying —

“Madame has expressed a wish to see the boys at their usual exercise of the play-hour. If the request be admissible —”

“Certainly, *mon général*, of course,” said he, and stepping forward, he beckoned to one of the drummers to come near, he whispered a word, and the tattoo beat out, and like magic every one sprang from his ranks, caps were flung into the air, and *vivas* rung out from every quarter of the court.

The sudden transition from discipline to perfect liberty added to our excitement, and we became half wild with delight. The first mad burst of pleasure over, we turned, as if by instinct, to our accustomed occupations — here were seen a party collecting for a drill, officers gathering and arranging their men, and sergeants assisting in the muster; there were others, armed with spades and shovels, at work on an entrenchment, while some were driving down stockades and fixing a palisade; another set, more peaceful in their pursuits, had retired to their little gardens, and were busy with watering-pots and trowels: the section I belonged to, were the seniors of the school, and we had erected a kind of fort which it was our daily amusement to defend and attack, the leadership on

either side being determined by lots. On this day the assault had fallen to my command, and I hurried hither and thither collecting my forces, and burning for the attack.

We were not long in assembling, and the garrison having announced their readiness by the display of a flag from the ramparts, the assault began. I know not why nor wherefore, but on this day my spirits were unusually high; it was one of those chance occasions when my temperament, heated and glowing, had elevated me in my own esteem, and I would have given my life for some opportunity of distinguishing myself.

I led my party on, then, with more than common daring, and though repulsed by the besieged, we fell back only for a moment, and returned to the assault determined to succeed; the others, animated by the same spirit, fought as bravely, and the cheers that rose from one side was replied to by those as full of defiance from the others. Heated and excited, I turned round to order an attack of my whole force, when, to my surprise, I beheld that the general and his staff, accompanied by the ladies, had taken their places a short distance off, and were become interested spectators of the siege. This alone was wanting to stimulate my efforts to the utmost, and I now returned to the fight with tenfold impetuosity. But if this feeling animated me, it also nerved my antagonists, for their resistance rose with every moment, and as they drove us back from their walls, cheers of triumph rang out and proclaimed the victory.

Already the battle had lasted nearly an hour, and all that was obtained was a slight breach in one of the

outworks, too small to be practicable for assault — in this state were matters when the sound of a cavalry escort turned every eye towards the entrance to the court-yard, where we now beheld a squadron of the *lanciers rouge* following a numerous and brilliant staff of general officers. Scarcely had they entered the gates when a loud cry rent the air, and every voice shouted, "*C'est lui, c'est lui,*" and the next moment, "*Vive Buonaparte, vive le premier consul.*" All that I had ever heard from poor De Meudon came rushing on my mind, and my heart swelled out till it seemed bursting my very bosom. The next instant my eye turned to the little fort, the moment was propitious, for there every cap was waving, every look bent towards *him*. I seized the opportunity, and pointing silently to the breach, stole forward, in a second I was beneath the grassy rampart, in another I reached the breach, the next brought me to the top, where, with a shout of victory, I called on my men to follow me; on they came rushing, but too late, already the garrison were upon me, and overcome by numbers I fought alone and unsupported; step by step they drove me to the edge of the rampart, already my foot was on the breach, when with a spring I dashed at the flag-staff and carried it with me as I fell headlong into the ditch; in a moment I was on my legs, but so stunned and crushed that I fell almost immediately again; cold perspiration broke over my face and forehead, and I should have fainted but that they dashed some water over me. As I lay sick and faint I lifted my eyes, and what was my amazement to see, not the little companions of the school about me, but the gorgeous uniform of staff officers, and two elegantly dressed

ladies, one of whom held a cup of water in her hand and sprinkled it over my brow. I looked down upon my torn dress, and the sleeve of my coat where the marks of my rank were already half effaced, and I felt the tears start into my eyes as the remembrance of my late failure crossed my mind; at the instant the crowd opened and a pale but handsome face, where command was tempered by a look of almost womanly softness, smiled upon me.

"*C'était bien fait, mon enfant,*" said he, "*très bien fait,* and if you have lost a coat by the struggle, why I must even see if I can't give you another to replace it. Monsieur Legrange, what is the character of this boy in the school? Is he diligent, zealous, and well conducted?"

"All of the three, general," said the *chef*, bowing obsequiously.

"Let him have his brevet; to date from to-day. Who are his friends?"

A whispered answer replied to this inquiry.

"Indeed!" said the first speaker; "reason the more we should take care of him. Monsieur," continued he, turning towards me, "to-morrow you shall have your epaulettes; never forget how you gained them, and remember ever that every grade in the service is within the reach of a brave man who does his duty." So saying he passed on, while overcome by emotion I could not speak or move.

"There, he is much better now," said a soft voice near me; "you see his colour is coming back." I looked up and there were two ladies standing beside me. The elder was tall and elegantly formed; her figure, which in itself was most graceful, looked to its

full advantage by the splendour of her dress: there was an air of stateliness in her manner, which had seemed *hauteur*, were it not for a look of most benevolent softness that played about her mouth whenever she spoke. The younger, who might in years have seemed her daughter, was in every respect unlike her: she was slight and delicately formed, her complexion and her black eyes, shaded by long dark fringe, bespoke the Provençal, her features were beautifully regular, and when at rest, completely Greek in their character, but each moment some chance word, some passing thought, implanted a new expression, and the ever-varying look of her flashing eyes, and full round lips, played between a smile and that arch spirit that essentially belongs to the fair daughters of the south. It was not until my fixed gaze had brought a deep blush to her cheek, that I felt how ardently I had been looking at her.

"Yes, yes," said she hurriedly, "he's quite well now," and at the same moment she made a gesture of impatience to pass on. But the elder held her arm close within her own, as she whispered with something of half malice — "But stay, Marie, I should like to hear his name. Ah!" cried she, starting in affected surprise, "how flushed you are; there must be something in the air here, so we had better proceed," and with a soft smile and a courteous motion of her hand, she passed on.

I looked after them as they went, a strange odd feeling stirred within my heart — a kind of wild joy with a mingled sense of hope too vague to catch at. I watched the drooping feather of her bonnet, and the fold of her dress as they fluttered in the wind, and

when she disappeared from my sight, I could scarce believe that she was not still beside me, and that her dark eyes did not look into my very soul. But already my companions crowded about me, and amid a hundred warm congratulations and kind wishes I took my way back to the college.

Scarcely was breakfast over the following morning, when the order arrived for my removal from the scholar quarter of the Polytechnique to that occupied by the *cadets*. A small tri-coloured cockade, affixed to my hat, was the only emblem of my new rank; but simple as it was, no decoration ever attracted more envy and admiration from the beholders, nor gave more pride to the wearer, than that knot of ribbon.

“At number thirteen you’ll find your quarters, *Monsieur le cadet*,” said a sergeant, as he presented me with the official order. I remember at this very hour what a thrill his military salute sent through me. It was the first acknowledgment of my grade — the first recognition that I was no longer a mere school-boy. I had not much time granted me to indulge such sensations; for already my schoolfellows had thronged round me, and overwhelmed me with questions and felicitations.

“Ah! what a fortunate fellow — no examination to go through — has his grade given him without toiling for it — is it the cavalry, Burke? — are you *à cheval*? — when do you join? where is your regiment? — shall we see you again? — won’t you write to us all about the corps when you join them? — who is your comrade? — yes, tell us that; who is he?”

"*Ma foi*," said I, "I know not more than yourselves. You are all aware to what an accident I owe my promotion. Where I am destined for, or in what corps, I can't tell; and as to my comrade —"

"Ah, take care he's no tyrant," said one.

"Yes, yes," cried another — "show him you know what a small sword is at once."

"Burke won't be trifled with," cried a third.

And then followed a very chorus of voices, each detailing some atrocity committed by the *cadets* on their newly-joined associates. One had a friend wounded in the side the very day he joined; another knew some one who was thrown out of a window: here was an account of a delicate boy, who passed an entire night in the snow, and died of a chest disease three weeks after; there, a victim to intemperance met his fate in the orgie that celebrated his promotion. This picture, I confess, did somewhat damp the ardour of my first impressions; and I took leave of my old friends with not less feeling of affection, that I doubted how much kindness and good feeling I had to expect from my new ones. In this mood of mind I shook their hands for the last time, and followed the soldier who carried my baggage to the distant quarter of the *école*. As I entered the large court by the richly ornamented gate, whose bronzed tracery and handsome carving dated from the time of Louis XIV., my heart swelled with conscious pride. The *façade* of the square, unlike the simple front of the scholars' quarters, was beautifully architectural; massive consoles supported the windows, and large armorial insignia, cut on stone, surmounted the different entrances: but what most captivated my spirits and engaged my at-

tention was a large flag in the centre, from which waved the broad ensign of France, beside which a sentinel paced to and fro. He presented arms as I passed; and the click of his musket, as he stood erect, sent a thrill through me, and made my very fingers tingle with delight.

"This is number thirteen, Sir," said the soldier, as we arrived in front of one of the doorways; and before I could reply the door opened, and a young officer, in the uniform of an infantry regiment, appeared. He was about to pass out, when his eye resting on the baggage the soldier had just placed beside him, he stopped suddenly, and touching his cap, asked in a polite tone —

"Not Mr. Burke, is it?"

"Yes," said I, bowing in return.

"*Eh, mon camarade,*" said he, holding out his hand, "delighted to see you. Have you breakfasted? Well, you'll find all ready for you in the quarters. I shall be back soon. I'm only going to a morning drill, which won't last half an hour; so make yourself at home, and we'll meet soon again."

So saying, he once more saluted me, and passed on. Not very like what I feared, thought I, as I entered the quarters, whose look of neatness and comfort so pleasantly contrasted with my late abode. I had barely time to look over the prints and maps of military subjects which ornamented the walls, when my new friend made his appearance.

"No parade to-day, thank heaven," said he, throwing down his cap and sabre, and lolling at full length on the little camp sofa. "Now, *mon cher camarade*, let us make acquaintance at once, for our time is likely

to be of the shortest. My name is Tascher, an humble *sous* lieutenant of the twenty-first regiment of foot. As much a stranger in this land as yourself, I fancy," continued he, after a slight pause, "but very well contented to be adopted by it."

After this opening he proceeded to inform me that he was the nephew of Madame Buonaparte, her sister's only son, who, at his mother's death, left Guadeloupe, and came over to France, and became an *élève* of the Polytechnique. There he had remained five years, and after a severe examination obtained his brevet in an infantry corps, his uncle Buonaparte having shown him no other favour nor affection, than a severe reprimand on one occasion for some boyish freak, when all the other delinquents escaped scot free.

"I am now under orders for service," said he, "but where for and when, I can't tell. But this I know, that whatever good fortune may be going a-begging, I, Lieutenant Tascher, am very like to get only the hem of the garment."

There was a tone of easy and frank good-nature in all he said, which at once disposed me to like the young creole, and we spent the whole afternoon recounting our various adventures and fortunes, and before night came on were sworn friends for life.

CHAPTER XXII.

The "Tuilleries" in 1803.

THE life of the cadet differed little from that of the schoolboy. The same routine of study — the same daily round of occupation and duty were his. Until drafted to the particular corps to which he might be appointed, he only could absent himself from the college

by special leave; and the most rigid of all military discipline prevailed during the brief interval which was to fit him for the arduous life of a soldier. The evenings, however, were at our disposal: and what a pleasure it was, the fatigue of the day over, to wander forth into the city — that brilliant Paris — near which I had lived so long, and yet had seen so little of.

At first, the splendour of the shops — the unceasing flow of population — the might and grandeur of the public buildings — attracted all my attention; and when these wore off in novelty, I could still wander with delight through the gay gardens of the Tuilleries, and watch the sparkling fountains as they splashed in the pale moonlight, and look upon the happy children who played about them, their merry laughter ringing through the water's splash. What a fairy scene it was, to watch the groups as they passed and repassed — came, and went, and disappeared — amid those dark alleys, where the silent footstep did not mar the sounds of happy voices: and then, how have I turned from these, to throw a wistful glance towards the palace-windows, where some half-closed curtain from time to time would show the golden sparkle of a brilliant lustre, or the rich frame of a mirror — mayhap an open sash would for a moment display some fair form; the outline only seen as she leaned on the balcony, and drank in the balmy air of the mild evening, while the soft swell of music would float from the gorgeous saloon, and, falling on my ear, set me a dreaming of pleasures my life had never known. My utter loneliness pressed deeper on me every day; for while each of my companions had friends and relatives, among whom their evenings were passed, I was friendless and alone. The narrowness of

my means — I had nothing save my pay — prevented my frequenting the theatre, or even accepting such invitations as the other cadets pressed upon me; and thus for hours long have I sat and watched the windows of the palace, weaving to myself stories of that ideal world from which my humble fortune debarred me.

It had been years since the Tuilleries exhibited any thing resembling the state that formerly prevailed in that splendid palace; but at the period I speak of Buonaparte had just been chosen consul for life, and already the organization of his household had undergone a most considerable alteration. In the early years of the consulate, a confused assemblage of aid-de-camps, whose heavy gait and loud speech betokened less the court than the camp, were the only attendants on his person. He lived in the centre pavilion, as if in a tent in the midst of his army; but now he inhabited the splendid suite of rooms to the left of the pavilion *de l'horologe*, as it is called, and which stretch away towards the river. The whole service of the palace was remodelled; and without wounding those prejudices that attached to the times of the deposed monarchy by adopting the titles of chamberlain or gentleman of the chamber, he gradually instituted the ceremonial of a court by preferring to the posts about his person those whose air and manners savoured most of the higher habitudes of society, and whose families were distinguished among the *noblesse* of the kingdom.

Duroc, the chief aid-de-camp of the general, was appointed governor of the palace, and it was said that the consul himself studied all the ancient ceremonial of the old court, and ordained that every etiquette of royalty should be resumed with the most unerring

accuracy. The chamberlains were represented by prefects of the palace, and Josephine had her ladies of honour, like any princess of the blood royal.

The consul, still imitating the ancient observances of the Bourbons, had his *petits levers* and his grand receptions; and if the new-created functionaries possessed little of the courteous ease and high-bred habitudes of the old court, there was in their hard-won honours — most of them promoted on the very field of battle — that which better suited the prejudices of the period, and scarcely less became the gilded saloons of the Tuilleries.

Like all newly-organized societies, the machinery worked ill at first: few, if any of them, had ever seen a court; and the proud but yet respectful obedience which characterized the French gentleman in the presence of his sovereign, was converted into an obsequious and vulgar deference towards Buonaparte, equally opposite to the true type, as it was foreign to the habits of the blunt soldier who proffered it. But what, after all, signified these blemishes? There was beauty — never in the brighter annals of France had more lovely women filled those gorgeous saloons; there was genius — heroism — the highest chivalry of the great nation could scarce vie with the proud deeds of those grouped around him — the mighty one, on whom each eye was fixed; and if, as M. Talleyrand remarked, there were those who knew not how to walk on the waxed floor of a palace, few could tread more finely the field of battle, and step with firmer foot the path that led to glory. Yet with all the first consul's pride in those whose elevation to rank and dignity was his own work, his predilections leaned daily more and more towards

the high and polished circles of the Faubourg St. Germain. The courteous and easy politeness of Talleyrand, the chivalrous and courtly bearing of the Count de Narbonne, and the graceful elegance of Segur's manners, formed too striking a contrast with the soldier-like rudeness of the newly-promoted generals, not to make a profound impression on one, who could in the deepest and weightiest concerns of life take into calculation the most minute and trivial circumstances.

This disparity, remarkable as it was among the men, was still more so in the ladies of the court; few of those newly elevated having tact enough either to imitate successfully the polished usages of the old nobility, or resolution sufficient to maintain their original habits without blushing at their own want of breeding.

If I have been led somewhat from the current of my own story by this digression, it is merely that I may passingly note down some of the features of the period — one of the most remarkable in the history of modern Europe, and one which already, to the far-seeing eye of some, betokened the speedy return to these very institutions of monarchy, to uproot which cost the best blood of France, and a revolution the most terrific the world has ever witnessed.

And now, looking back on the great career of that great man, no portion of his history can perhaps present any thing to compare with the splendour of the consulate: a long succession of victories — the spoils of half Europe — glory to very satiety had intoxicated the nation — a country flourishing in every element of prosperity — social order restored — a high position amid surrounding nations — and every thing that could gratify national ambition obtained — France stood at

the very pinnacle of her greatness. Even the splendour of those names who represented the various states of Europe at her court seem to attest her supremacy. The stately and polished Whitworth, conspicuous by the elegance of his appearance and the perfection of his aristocratic bearing; the Russian ambassador, Marcoff; the Chevalier Azara, the minister of Spain, the courtier of Europe; Baron de Cetto, the Envoy of Saxony, one of the most distinguished, both by manners and ability, in the whole diplomatic circle, were among those who frequented the first consul's levees, which already, in the splendour of costume and the gorgeous display of uniform, rivalled the most sumptuous days of the monarchy.

All the long-forgotten ceremonial of a court was restored: dinners, most splendid in all the array of pomp and grandeur, were given every week; fêtes that vied with the luxurious era of Louis XIV. himself, took place frequently; and Paris became the rendezvous for all Europe, curious to behold the rich trophies of successful wars, and mix in the delight of a capital, where pleasure reigned triumphant.

The theatre presented an array of genius and talent hitherto unequalled. Talma and Mademoiselle Mars were in the very zenith of their fame, and obtained a large share of Buonaparte's favour, whose tastes were eminently dramatic. In a word, a new era had commenced, and every class and walk, every condition of man, seemed resolved to recompense itself by the pursuit of pleasure, for the long and dark night of trouble through which it had passed.

While, therefore, the court of the first consul partook of such features as those, the circle of Josephine

possessed attractions totally different: there, amid her intimate friends, all the charm and fascination of French society held sway; each evening saw assembled round her the wittiest and most polished persons of the day; the gay and spirited talkers who so pre-eminently gave the tone to Parisian society; the handsomest women, and the most distinguished of the *littérateurs* of the period, found ready access to one, whose own powers of pleasing have left an undying impression on some, who even still can recall these delightful moments. Such were, in brief, the leading features of the court then held in the Tuilleries, and such the germ of that new order of things which was so soon to burst forth upon astonished Europe, under the proud title of The Empire.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A surprise.

I WAS sitting one evening alone in my quarters, an open volume before me, in which I persuaded myself I was reading, while my thoughts were far otherwise engaged, when my comrade Tascher suddenly entered the room, and throwing himself into a chair, exclaimed in a tone of passionate impatience —

“*Pardieu!* it is a fine thing to be nephew to the first man in France!”

“What has happened?” said I, when I perceived that he stopped short without explaining farther.

“What has happened! — enough to drive one mad. Just hear this. You know how fond I am of Paris, and how naturally I must wish to be near the Tuilleries, where I have the *entrée* to my aunt’s soirées. Well, there was a vacancy occurred yesterday in the *huitième* hussars — a corps always stationed here or at Versailles

— and as I am longing to have a cavalry grade, I waited on Madame Buonaparte to solicit her interest in my favour. She promised of course. The general was to breakfast with her, and it was all settled: she was to ask him for the promotion; and I had not a doubt of success. In fact, if I must confess, I told two or three of my friends, and actually received their congratulations. It so fell out, however, that he did not come to breakfast, nor dinner either — there's no knowing that man; but what think you, he walked in, this evening, just as we were preparing to act a proverb. Such a scene as it was, to be sure. No one expected him. Most of us were dressed up in costumes of one kind or other; and I, *Ma foi!* ridiculous enough, I suppose — I was costumed like a galley-slave. He stood for a second or two at the door with his arms folded, and his stern eyes wandering over the whole room. There was not one amongst us would not have wished himself many a mile away: even my aunt herself seemed quite confused, and blushed, and grew pale, and blushed again.

“‘Ha!’ cried he at last, in his dry, short voice. ‘Pardon, ladies and gentlemen, I have made a mistake — I believed I was in the palace of the Tuilleries, and I find this is the Porte St. Martin.’

“‘*Fi donc*, Buonaparte,’ cried my aunt, blushing, while with one of her sweetest smiles she endeavoured to bring him back to good humour. ‘See how you have frightened Madame de Narbonne — she’ll never be able to play the miller’s wife; and Marie here, her tears will wash away all her rouge.’

“‘And this amiable gentleman — what is to become of him?’ said he, interrupting her, while he laid his

hand on my shoulder, and I stood trembling like a culprit beside him.

“‘Ah, there! — that’s Tascher,’ said she laughingly; and as if happy to escape from her greater embarrassment by any means, she continued — ‘Your question comes indeed quite apropos. I have a request to make in his favour: there’s a vacancy in the *huitième*, I think it is — eh, Edward?’ I nodded slightly, for if my life depended on it, I could not have uttered a word. ‘Now, I am sure he’s been sous-lieutenant long enough, and in the infantry too.’

“‘Can you ride well, Sir?’ said he, turning to me with a half frown on his pale face.

“‘Yes, general,’ replied I, with my heart almost choking me as I spoke.

“‘Well, Sir, you shall be employed, and in a service worthy your present tastes, if I may judge from your costume. A detachment of prisoners is to march to-morrow from this for the *bagne de Brest* — hold yourself in readiness to accompany the military escort. Go, Sir, and report yourself to your colonel.’ He waved his hand when he had finished, and how I left the room, reached the street, and found myself here, hang me if I can tell you.”

“And is there no help for this? must you really go?” said I, compassionating the dejected and sorrow-struck expression of the youth.

“Must I go! *Ma foi!* you know little of this dear uncle of mine, if you ask such a question. When once his mind’s made up, any thing like an attempt to argue only confirms his resolve. The best thing now is, to obey and say nothing; for if my aunt remonstrates, I

may spend my life in garrison there over the galley-slaves."

A knocking at the outer door interrupted our conversation at this moment, and a corporal of the staff entered, with a despatch-bag at his waist.

"Sous-Lieutenant Tascher," said he, touching his cap, and presenting a large official-looking letter to my companion, who threw it from him on the table, and turned away to hide his confusion. "Monsieur Burke," said the corporal, withdrawing another ominous document from his leathern pouch.

"*Diantre!*" cried Tascher, turning quickly about — "have I got you into a scrape as well as myself. I remember now the general asked me who was my 'comrade.'"

I took the paper with a trembling hand, and tore it open. The first line was all I could read; it was a war-office official, appointing me to the vacant commission in the *huitième* hussars.

Tascher's hand shook as he leaned on my shoulder, and I could feel a convulsive twitching of his fingers as his agitation increased; but in a second or two he recovered his self-command, and taking my hand within both of his, he said, while the large tears were starting from his eyes —

"I'm glad it's you, Burke," and then turned away, unable to say more.

It was some time before I could bring myself to credit my good fortune. Had I been free to choose, I could have desired nothing better nor more to my liking; and when I succeeded at length, then came my embarrassment at my poor friend's disappointment, which must have been still more poignant as contrasted

with my success. Tascher, however, had all the creole warmth of temperament. The first burst over, he really enjoyed the thought of my promotion; and we sat up the entire night talking over plans for the future, and making a hundred resolves for contingencies, some of which never arose, and many, when they came, suggested remedies of their own.

At daybreak my comrade's horses came to the door, and a mounted orderly attended to accompany him to the prison where the convoy were assembled. We shook hands again and again. He was leaving what had been his home for years, Paris — the gay and brilliant city, in whose pleasures he had mixed, and whose fascinations he had tasted. I was parting from one with whom I had lived in a friendship as close as can subsist between two natures essentially different — we both were sad.

“Adieu, Burke,” said he, as he waved his hand for the last time. “I hope you'll command the *huitième* when next we meet.”

I hurried into the quarters, which already seemed lonely and deserted, so soon does desolation throw its darkening shadow before it. The sword, that had hung above the chimney crosswise on my own was gone; the chako, too, and the pistols were missing; the vacant chair stood opposite to mine; and the isolation I felt became so painful, that I wandered out into the open air, glad to escape the sight of objects, every one of which only suggested how utterly alone I stood in the world, when the departure of one friend had left me companionless.

No one save he who has experienced it can form any just idea of the intense hold a career of any kind

will take of the mind of him, who, without the ties of country, of kindred, and of friends, devotes all his energies in one direction. The affections that might, under other influences, have grown up — the hopes that might have flourished in the happy sphere of a home, become the springs of a more daring ambition. In proportion as he deserts other roads in life, the path he has struck out for himself seems wider and grander, and his far-seeing eye enables him to look into the long distance with a prophetic vision, where are rewards for his hard-won victories, the recompense of long years of toil. The pursuit, become a passion, gradually draws all into its vortex; and that success which at first he believed only attainable by some one mighty effort, seems at last to demand every energy of his life and every moment of his existence; and as the miser would deem his ruin near, should the most trifling opportunity of gain escape him, so does the ambitious man feel that every incident in life must be made tributary to the success which is his mammon. It was thus I thought of the profession of arms; my whole soul was in it; no other wish, no other hope divided my heart; that passion reigned there alone. How often do we find it in life, that the means become the end — that the effort we employ to reach an object takes hold upon our fancy — gains hourly on our affections, and at length usurps the place of what before had been our idol. As a boy, liberty, the bold assertion of my country's rights, stirred my heart, and made me wish to be a soldier. As years rolled on, the warlike passion sank deeper and deeper in my nature; the thirst for glory grew upon me, and forgetting all save that, I longed for the time when on the battle-field I should win my

way to fame and honour. In this wise were my musings, as I loitered homeward and entered my quarters, a sealed packet addressed Sous-Lieutenant Burke — how that humble title made my heart beat — lay on my table. Supposing it referred to my new appointment, I sat down to con it over at my leisure; but no sooner had I torn open the envelope than a card fell to the ground. I took it up hastily and read: — “*D’après l’ordre de Madame Buonaparte j’ai l’honneur de vous inviter à une soirée —.*” What! cried I aloud — *me!* invite *me* to the palace! There must be some mistake here; and I turned again to the envelope, where my name was legibly written, with my grade, and the number of my new corps. There could be no doubt of it, and yet was it still inexplicable; I that was so perfectly alone, a stranger, without a friend, save among the humble ranks of the school, how came such a distinction as this to be conferred on me. I thought of Tascher; but then we had lived months together, and such a thing had never been even alluded to. The more I reflected on it, the greater became my difficulty; and in a maze of confusion and embarrassment I passed the day in preparation for the evening, for, as was customary at the period, the invitations for small parties were issued on the very mornings themselves. My first care was, to look after the uniform of my new corps, in which I knew I must appear. My last remaining bank-note, the sole survivor of my little stock of wealth, was before me, and I sat calculating with myself the costly outlay of a hussar dress, the full uniform of which had not till now entered into my computation. Never was my ingenuity more sorely tried than in the endeavour to bring the outlay within the

narrow limits of my little purse; and when, at length, I would think that all had been remembered, some small but costly item would rise up against me, and disconcert all my calculations.

At noon I set out to wait on my new colonel, whose quarters were in the Place Vendôme. The visit was a short and not over pleasant one; a crowd of officers filled the rooms, among whom I edged my way with difficulty towards the place where Colonel Marbois was standing. He was a short, thick-set, vulgar-looking man of about fifty; his moustache and whiskers meeting above the lip, and his bushy, black beard below, gave him the air of a pioneer, which his harsh Breton accent did not derogate from.

"*Ah c'est vous,*" said he, as my name was announced: "you'll have to learn in future, Sir, that officers of your rank are not received at the levees of their colonel. You hear me; report yourself to the *Chef d'escadron*, however, who will give you your orders; and mark me, Sir, let this be the last day you are seen in that uniform."

A short and not very gracious nod concluded the audience, and I took my leave not the less abashed, that I could mark a kind of half smile on most of the faces about me as I withdrew from the crowd. Scarcely in the street, however, when my heart felt light and my step elastic. I was a *sous-lieutenant* of hussars, and if I did my duty what cared I for the smiles and frowns of my colonel; and had not the General Buona-partie himself told me, "that no grade was too high for the brave man who did so."

I can scarcely avoid a smile even yet as I call to mind the awe I felt on entering the splendid shop of

Monsieur Crillac, the fashionable tailor of those days, whose plate-glass windows and showy costumes formed the standing point for many a loungeur around the corner of the Rue de Richelieu and the Boulevard. His saloon, as he somewhat ostentatiously called it, was a rendezvous for the idlers of a fashionable world, who spent their mornings canvassing the last gossip of the city, and devising new extravagancies in dress. The morning papers, caricatures, prints of fashions, patterns of waistcoats, and new devices for buttons were scattered over a table, round which, in every attitude of indolence and ease, were stretched some dozen of the exquisites of the period, engaged in that species of half-*ennui*, half-conversation, that form a considerable part of the existence of your young men of fashion of every age and every country. Their frock-coats of light cloth, high-collared, and covered with buttons; their *bottes-à-revers* reaching only mid leg, and met there by a tight *pantalon collant*; their hair studiously brushed back off their foreheads, and worn long, though not in *queue* behind, bespoke them as the most accurate types of the mode.

The appearance of a youth in the simple uniform of the Polytechnique in such a place seemed to excite universal astonishment. Such a phenomenon apparently had never been witnessed before; and as they turned fully round to stare at me, it was clear they never deemed that any mark of rudeness could be felt by one so humble as I was. Monsieur Crillac himself, who was sipping his glass of *eau sucré* with one arm leaning on the chimney-piece, never deigned to pay me other attention than a half smile, as with a voice of most patronizing softness he lisped out —

"What can we do for you here, Monsieur?"

Apparently the answer to this question was a matter of interest to the party, who suddenly ceased talking to listen.

"I wish to order a uniform," said I, summoning up all my resolution not to seem abashed. "This is a tailor's, if I don't mistake."

"Monsieur is quite correct," replied the imperturbable proprietor, whose self-satisfied smile became still more insulting, "but perhaps not exactly what you seek for. Gentlemen who wear your cloth seldom visit us."

"No, Crillac," interrupted one of the bystanders; "I never heard that you advertised yourself as fashioner to the Polytechnique, or tailor in ordinary to the corps of Pompiers."

"You are insolent, Sir," said I, turning fiercely round upon the speaker. The words were scarce spoken, when the party sprung to their legs; some endeavouring to restrain the temper of the young man addressed, others, pressing around, called on me to apologize on the spot for what I had said.

"No, no; let us have his name — his name," said three or four in a breath. "Beauvais will take the punishment into his own hands."

"Be advised, young gentleman; unsay your words, and go your way," said an elder one of the party, while he added, in a whisper, "Beauvais has no equal in Paris with the small sword."

"There is my address," said I, seizing a pen, and writing on a piece of paper before me.

"Ha!" said Beauvais, as he threw his eye on the writing, "he has got his grade it seems — all the

better that; I half shrunk from the ridicule of an affair with a cadet. So you are serious about this."

"Sir!" said I; all my efforts being barely enough to repress my rising passion.

"Well, well, enough about it. To-morrow morning — the Bois de Boulogne — the rapier: you understand me, I suppose."

I nodded, and was about to leave the place, when I remembered that, in my confusion, I had neither asked my antagonist's name nor rank. "And you, Sir," said I, "may I have the honour to learn who you are?"

"*Pardieu!* my young friend," cried one of the others, "the information will not strengthen your nerves; but if you will have it, he is the Marquis de Beauvais, and tolerably well known in that little locality where he expects to meet you to-morrow."

"Till then, Sir," replied I, touching my cap, as I turned into the street — not, however, before a burst of laughter rung through the party at a witticism of which I was the object, and the latter part of which only could I catch. It was Beauvais who spoke. "In which case, Crillac, another artist must take his measure." The allusion could not be mistaken, and, I confess, I did not relish it like the others.

I should, I fear, have fallen very low in the estimate of my companions and associates, could the real state of my heart at that moment have been laid open to them. It was, I freely own, one of great depression. But an hour ago, and life was opening before me with many a bright and cheerful hope; and now, in an instant, was my fortune clouded. Let me not be misunderstood: among the rules of the Polytechnique

duelling was strictly forbidden; and although numerous transgressions occurred, so determined was the head of the government to put down the practice, that the individuals thus erring were either reduced in rank, or their promotion stopped for a considerable period; while the personal displeasure of General Buonaparte rarely failed to show itself with reference to them. Now, it was clear to me that some unknown friend, some secret well-wisher, had interested himself in my humble fate — that I owed my newly-acquired rank to his kindness and good offices. What then might I not be forfeiting by this unhappy rencontre? Was it not more than likely that such an instance of misconduct, the very day of my promotion, might determine the whole tenor of my future career? What misrepresentation might not gain currency about my conduct? These were sad reflections indeed, and every moment but increased them.

When I reached the college, I called on one of my friends; but not finding him in his quarters, I wrote a few lines, begging he would come over to me the moment he returned. This done, I sat down alone, to think over my adventure, and devise, if I could, some means to prevent its publicity, or if not that, its being garbled and misstated. Hour after hour rolled past, my wandering thoughts took no note of time, and the deep-tolled bell of the Polytechnique struck eight before I was aware the day was nearly over. Nine was the hour mentioned on my card of invitation: it flashed suddenly on me. What was to be done? I had no uniform, save that of the "*école*." Such a costume in such a place would, I feared, be considered too ridiculous; yet to absent myself altogether was impossible.

Never was I in such a dilemma. All my endeavours to rescue myself were fruitless; and at last, worn out with the conflict of my doubts and fears, I stepped into the fiacre and set out for the palace.

CHAPTER XXIV.

The "Pavilion de Flore."

As my humble carriage slackened its pace to a walk on approaching the Place Carousel, I for the first time perceived that the open space around was thronged with equipages, moving slowly along in line towards the gate of the palace. A picquet of dragoons was drawn up at the great archway, and mounted *gens d'armes* rode up and down to preserve order in the crowd. Before me stretched the long *façade* of the Tuilleries, now lighted up in its entire extent. The rich hangings and costly furniture could be seen, even where I was.

What a sinking sense of shame overwhelmed me as I thought of my humble position amid that mighty concourse of all that was great and illustrious in France! — and how I shrunk within myself as I thought of the poor scholar of the Polytechnique, for such my dress proclaimed me, mixing with the most distinguished diplomates and generals of Europe. The rebuke I had met with from my colonel in the morning was still fresh in my recollection, and I dreaded something like a repetition of it.

Oh! why had I not known that this was a grand reception? was the ever-rising thought of my mind. My card of invitation said a *soirée*: even that I might have dared; but here was a regular levee. Already I was near enough to hear the names announced at the foot

of the grand staircase, where ambassadors, senators, ministers of state, and officers of the highest rank, succeeded each other in quick succession. My carriage stood now next but two. I was near enough to see the last arrival hand his card to the *huissier* in waiting, and hear his title called out, "Le Ministre de la Guerre," when the person in the carriage before me cried to his coachman — "To the left — the Pavilion de Flore," and at the same moment the carriage turned from the line, and drove rapidly towards a distant wing of the palace.

"Move up! move up!" shouted a dragoon, "or are you for the *soirée de Madame*?"

"Yes, yes!" said I hastily, as I heard his question.

"Follow that carriage, then," said he, pointing with his sabre; and in a moment we left the dense file, and followed the sounds of the retiring wheels towards a dark corner of the palace, where a single lamp over a gate was the only light to guide us. Never shall I forget the sense of relief I felt as I lay back in the carriage, and listened to the hum and din of the vast crowd growing each moment fainter. "Thank heaven," said I, "it's no levee." Scarce half a dozen equipages stood around the door as we drove up, and a single dragoon was the guard of honour.

"Whom shall I announce, Sir?" said a *huissier* in black, whose manner was as deferential as though my appearance bespoke an ambassador. I gave my name, and followed him up a wide stair, where the deep velvet carpet left no foot-fall audible. A large bronze candelabra, supporting a blaze of wax-lights, diffused a light like day on every side. The doors opened before us as if by magic, and I found myself in an ante-

chamber, where the *huissier*, repeating my name to another in waiting, retired. Passing through this, we entered a small drawing-room, in which sat two persons engaged at a chess-table, but who never looked up, or noticed us, as we proceeded. At last the two wings of a wide folding-door were thrown open, and my name was announced in a low but audible voice.

The *salon* into which I now entered was a large and splendidly-furnished apartment, whose light, tempered by a species of *abat-jour*, gave a kind of soft mysterious effect to every thing about, and made even the figures, as they sat in little groups, appear something almost dramatic in their character. The conversation, too, was maintained in a half-subdued tone — a gentle murmur of voices, that, mingling with the swell of music in another and distant apartment, and the splash of a small fountain in a vase of gold-fish in the room itself, made a strange but most pleasing assemblage of sounds. Even in the momentary glance which, on entering, I threw around me, I perceived that no studied etiquette or courtly stateliness prevailed. The guests were disposed in every attitude of lounging ease and careless *abandon*; and it was plain to see that all, or nearly all, about, were intimates of the place.

As the door closed behind me, I stood half uncertain how to proceed. Unhappily, I knew little of the habitudes of the great world; and every step I took was a matter of difficulty.

"I think you will find Madame Buonaparte in that room," said a middle-aged and handsome man, whose mild voice and gentle smile did much to set me at my ease; "but perhaps you don't know her."

I muttered something I meant to be a negative, to which he immediately replied —

“Then let me present you. There is no ceremony here, and I shall be your groom of the chambers — but here she is. Madame la Consulesse, this young gentleman desires to make his respects.”

“Ha! our friend of the Polytechnique — Monsieur Burke, is it not?”

“Yes, Madame,” said I, bowing low, and blushing deeply as I recognised, in the splendidly-attired and beautiful person before me, the lady who so kindly held the water to my lips the day of my accident at the school.

“Why, they told me you were promoted — a hussar, I think.”

“Yes, Madame — but — but —”

“You are too fond of old associations to part from them easily,” said she, laughing. “Come here, Stephanie, and see a miracle of manhood, that could resist all the *cliquant* of a hussar, for the simple costume of the Ecole Militaire. Monsieur de Custine, this is my young friend of whom I told you the other day.”

The gentleman, the same who had so kindly noticed me, bowed politely.

“And now I must leave you together, for I see they are teasing poor Madame Lefebvre;” and with a smile she passed on into a small *boudoir*, from which the sounds of merry laughter were proceeding.

“You don’t know any one here?” said Monsieur de Custine, as he motioned me to a place beside him on a sofa; “nor is there any very remarkable person here to point out to you this evening. The first consul’s levee absorbs all the celebrities — but by-and-by they

will drop in to pay their respects, and you'll see them all. The handsome woman yonder with her fan before her, is Madame Beauharnois Lavalette, and the good-looking young fellow in the staff uniform is Monsieur de Melcy, a step-son of General Rapp."

"And the large handsome man with the embroidered coat who passed through so hurriedly?"

"Yes, he is somebody — that's Decrès, the *Ministre de la Marine* — he is gone to the levee; and there, next the door, with his eyes cast down, and his hands folded, that is the Abbé Maynal, one of the most 'spirituel' men of the day; but I suppose you'd much rather look at the beauties of the court than hear long stories about literature and politics; and there is the gem of loveliness among them."

I turned my eyes as he spoke, and close beside me, engaged in an eager conversation with an old lady, stood a young and most beautiful girl. Her long hair, through which, in the then mode, violets were wreathed and interwoven, descended in rich masses of curl over a neck white as marble. The corsage of her dress, which, in imitation of Greek costume, was made low, displayed her well-rounded shoulders to the greatest advantage; and though rather below, than above the middle size, there was a dignity and grace in the air of her figure, and a certain elegance about her slightest movements, that was most fascinating.

"And the 'Rose de Provence' — how is she this evening?" said my companion, rising suddenly, and presenting himself with a smile before her.

"Ah, you here, Monsieur de Custine? we thought you had been at Nancy."

The accent, the tone of voice in which she said

these few words sent a thrill through me, and as I looked again, I recognized the young lady who stood at Madame Buonaparte's side on the memorable day of my fall. Perhaps my astonishment made me start; for she turned round towards me, and with a soft and most charming smile saluted me.

"How they are laughing in that room," said she, turning towards her other companion. "Monsieur de Custine has deserted his dear friend this evening, and left her to her unassisted defence."

"*Ma foi*," replied he, "I got ill rewarded for my advocacy. It was only last week when I helped her out through one of her blunders in grammar — she called me a 'ganache' for my pains."

"How very ungrateful. You that have been interpreter to her — her tutor for the entire winter — without whom, she could neither have obtained an ice, nor a glass of water."

"So is it; but you are all ungrateful — but I think I had better go and pay my respects to her — pray come along with me."

I followed the party into a small room, fitted up like a tent, where, amid some half-dozen persons assembled around, like an audience, sat a large, florid, and good-looking person — her costume of scarlet velvet turban and robe, adding to the flushed and high-coloured expression of her features. She was talking in a loud voice, and with an accent of such *patois* as I should much more naturally have expected in a remote faubourg, than in the gilded salons of the Tuilleries. She had been relating some anecdotes of military life, which came within her own experience, and evidently

amused her auditory as much by her manner, as the matter of her narrative.

“*Oui parbleu*,” said she, drawing a long breath, “I was only the wife of a sergeant in the ‘Gardes Françaises’ in those days; but they were pleasant times, and the men one used to see were men indeed. They were not as much laced in gold, nor had not so much finery on their jackets; but they were bold, bronzed, manly fellows. You’d not see such a poor miserable little fellow as De Custine there, in a whole demi-brigade.” When the laugh this speech caused, and in which her own merry voice joined, subsided, she continued — “Where will you find now any thing like the twenty-second of the line? Pioche was in that — poor Pioche — I tied up his jaw in Egypt when it was smashed by a bullet. I remember, too, when the regiment came back: your husband, the general, reviewed them in the court below, and poor Pioche was quite offended at not being noticed. ‘We were good friends,’ quoth he, ‘at Mount Tabor, but he forgets all that now: that’s what comes of a rise in the world. “Le Petit Caporal” was humble enough once I warrant him, but now he can’t remember me.’ Well, they were ordered to march past in line, and there was Pioche, with his great dark eyes fixed on the general, and his big black beard flowing down to his waist; but no, he never noticed him no more than the tambour that beat the rappel. He could bear it no longer — his head was twisting with impatience and chagrin, and he sprung out of the lines, and seizing a brass gun — a ‘*pièce de quatre*’ — he mounted it like a fusee to his shoulder, and marched past, calling out ‘*Tu*’ — he always *tu-toyed* him — ‘*tu me rappelle maintenant n’est-ce pas petit?*’”

No one enjoyed this little story more than Madame Buonaparte herself, who laughed for several minutes after it was over. Story after story did she pour forth in this way: most of them, however, had their merit in some personality or other, which, while recognised by the rest, had no attraction for me. There was in all she said the easy self-complacency of a kind-hearted but vulgar woman, vain of her husband, proud of his services, and perfectly indifferent to the habits and usages of a society, whose manners she gave herself no trouble to imitate, nor of whose ridicule was she in the least afraid.

I sauntered from the room alone, to wander through the other apartments, where objects of art and curiosities of every kind were profusely scattered. The marbles of Greece and Rome, the strange carvings of Egypt, the rich vases of Sevres were there, amid cabinet pictures of the rarest and most costly kind. Those delicious landscapes of the time of Louis XV., where every charm of nature and art was conveyed upon the canvas — the cool arbours of Versailles, with their terraced promenades and hissing fountains, the subjects which Vanloo loved to paint, and which that voluptuous court loved to contemplate — the long alleys of shady green, where gay groups were strolling in the mellow softness of an autumn sunset — those proud dames whose sweeping garments brushed the velvet turf, and at whose sides, uncovered, walked the chivalry of France, how did they live again in the bright pencil of Mouche-ron, and how did they carry one in fancy to the great days of the monarchy. Strange place for them too: the boudoir of her, whose husband had uprooted the ancient dynasty they commemorated — had erased from the list

of kings that proudest of all the royal stocks in Europe. Was it the narrow-minded glory of the usurper that loved to look upon the greatness he had humbled, that brought them there, or was it rather the well-spring of that proud hope just rising in his heart that he was to be successor of those great kings, whose history formed the annals of Europe itself? As I wandered on, captivated in every sense by the charm of what to me was a scene in fairy land, I came suddenly before a picture of Josephine, surrounded by the ladies of her court. It was by Isabey, and had all the delicate beauty and transparent finish of that delightful painter. Beside it was another portrait by the same artist, and I started back in amazement at the resemblance. Never had colour better caught the rich tint of a southern complexion: the liquid softness of eye, the full and sparkling intelligence of ready wit and bright fancy all beamed in that lovely face. It needed not the golden letters in the frame which called it "La Rose de Provence." I sat down before it unconsciously, delighted that I might gaze on such beauty unconstrained. The white hand leaned on a balustrade, and seemed almost as if stretching from the very canvas. I could have knelt and kissed it. That was the very look she wore the hour I saw her first — it had never left my thoughts day or night — the half-rising blush, the slightly-averted head, the mingled look of impatience and kindness — all were there; and so entranced had I become, that I feared each instant lest the vision would depart, and leave me dark and desolate. The silence of the room was almost unbroken — a distant murmur of voices, the tones of a harp, were all I heard, and I sat, I know not how long, thus wrapped in ecstasy.

A tall screen of Chinese fabrique separated the part of the room I occupied from the rest, and left me free to contemplate alone those charms which each moment grew stronger upon me. An hour might perhaps have thus elapsed, when suddenly I heard the sound of voices approaching, but in a different direction from that of the *salons*. They were raised above the ordinary tone of speaking, and one in particular sounded in a strange accent of mingled passion and sarcasm, which I shall never forget. The door of the room was flung open before I could rise from my chair, and two persons entered, neither of whom could I see from my position behind the screen.

"I ask you, again and again, is the treaty of Amiens a treaty, or is it not?" said a harsh imperious tone, I at once recognised as that of the first consul, while his voice actually trembled with anger.

"My Lord Whitworth observed, if I mistake not," replied a measured and soft accent, where a certain courtier-like unction prevailed, "that the withdrawal of the British troops from Malta would follow, on our making a similar step as regards our forces in Switzerland and Piedmont."

"What right have they to make such a condition? They never complained of the occupation of Switzerland at the time of the treaty. I will not hear of such a stipulation. I tell you, Monsieur de Talleyrand, I'd rather see the English in the Faubourg St. Antoine, than in the Island of Malta. Why should we treat with England as a continental power? Of India, if she will — and as to Egypt, I told my Lord that sooner or later it must belong to France."

"A frankness he has reason to be thankful for,"

observed M. de Talleyrand, in a voice of sarcastic slyness.

“*Que voulez-vous,*” replied Buonaparte, in a raised tone, “they want a war, and they shall have it: what matter the cause — such treaties of peace as these had better be covered with black crape.” Then dropping his voice to a half whisper, he added, “You must see him to-morrow. Explain how the attacks of the English press have irritated me — how deeply wounded I must feel at such a licence permitted under the very eyes of a friendly government — plots against my life encouraged — assassination countenanced. Repeat that Sebastiani’s mission to Egypt is merely commercial. That although prepared for war, our wish, the wish of France is peace. That the armaments in Holland are destined for the colonies. Show yourself disposed to treat, but not to make advances. Reject the word *ultimatum*, if he employ it. The phrase implies a parley between a superior and an inferior. This is no longer the France that remembers an English commissary at Dunkirk. If he do not use the word — then remark on its absence — say, these are not times for longer anxiety — that we must know, at last, to what we are to look. Tell him the Bourbons are not still on the throne here. Let him feel with whom he has to deal.”

“And if he demand his passport,” gravely observed Talleyrand, “you can be in the country for a day — at Plombieres — at St. Cloud.”

A low subdued laugh followed these words, and they walked forward towards the *salons*, still conversing, but in a whispered tone.

A cold perspiration broke over my face and forehead, the drops fell heavily down my cheek, as I sat

an unwilling listener of this eventful dialogue. That the fate of Europe was in the balance, I knew full well — and, ardently as I longed for war, the dreadful picture that rose before me damped much of my ardour — while a sense of my personal danger, if discovered where I was, made me tremble from head to foot. It was then, with a sinking spirit, that I retraced my steps towards the *salons*, not knowing if my absence had not been remarked and commented on. How little was I versed in such society — where each came and went as it pleased him; where the most brilliant beauty, the most spiritual conversationalist, left no gap by absence — and where such as I were no more noticed than the statues that held the wax-lights.

The *salons* were now crowded — ministers of state, ambassadors, general officers, in their splendid uniforms, filled the apartments — in which the din of conversation and the sounds of laughter mingled. Yet, through the air of gaiety which reigned throughout — the tone of light and flippant smartness which prevailed — I thought I could mark here and there, among some of the ministers, an appearance of excitement, and a look of pre-occupation, little in unison with the easy intimacy which all seemed to possess. I looked on every side for the first consul himself, but he was no where to be seen. Monsieur Talleyrand, however, remained — I recognised him by his soft and measured accent, as he sat beside Madame Buonaparte, and was relating some story in a low voice, at which she seemed greatly amused. I could not help wondering at the lively and animated character of features, beneath which were concealed the dark secrets of state affairs, the tangled mysteries of political in-

trigue. To look on him, you would have said — there sits one, whose easy life flows on, unruffled by this world's chances. Not so the tall and swarthy man, whose dark moustache hangs far below his chin, and who leans on the chimney-piece yonder — the strong veins of his forehead are swollen and knitted, and his deep voice seems to tremble with strong emotion as he speaks.

“Pray, Monsieur, who is that officer yonder?” said I, to a gentleman beside me, and whose shoulder was half turned away.

“That,” said he, raising his glass — “that is Savary, the minister of police. And, pardon, you are Mr. Burke — is 't not so?”

I started as he pronounced my name, and looking fixedly at him, recognised the antagonist with whom I was to measure swords the next morning in the Bois de Boulogne, I coloured at the awkwardness of my situation; but he, with more ease and self-possession, resumed —

“Monsieur, this is, to me at least, a very fortunate meeting. I have called twice, in the hope of seeing you this evening — and am overjoyed now to find you here. I behaved very ill to you this morning — I feel it now — I almost felt it at the time. If you will accept my apology for what has occurred, I make it most freely. My character is in no need of an affair, to make me known as a man of courage — yours, there can be no doubt of. May I hope you agree with me? I see you hesitate — perhaps I anticipate the reason — you do not know how far you can, or ought to receive such an amende.” I nodded, and he con-

tinued — “Well, I am rather a practised person in these matters, and I can safely say, you may.”

“Be it so then,” said I, taking the hand he proffered, and shaking it warmly — “I am too young in the world to be my own guide, and I feel you would not deceive me.”

A gratified look, and a renewed pressure of the hand, replied to my speech.

“One favour more — you musn’t refuse me. Let us sup together — my *calèche* is below — people are already taking their leave here — and if you have no particular reason for remaining —”

“None — I know no one.”

“*Allons*, then,” said he, gaily taking my arm — and I soon found myself descending the marble stairs, beside the man I had expected to stand opposed to in deadly conflict a few hours later.

CHAPTER XXV.

The supper at “Beauvilliers.”

“WHERE to?” asked the coachman, as we entered the caleche.

“Beauvilliers,” said the marquis, throwing himself back in his seat, and remaining for some minutes silent. At last, as if suddenly recollecting that we were strangers to each other, he said — “You know Beauvilliers of course.”

“No,” replied I with hesitation; “I really have not any acquaintance.”

“*Parbleu!*” said he, laughing, “you ought at least to have his friendship. He is the most celebrated restaurateur of this or any other age; no one has carried the great art of the cuisine to a higher per-

fection, and his cellars are unequalled in Paris — but you shall pronounce for yourself.”

“Unhappily my judgment is of little value. Do you forget that the diet roll of the Polytechnique is a bad school for gastronomy.”

“But a glorious preparation for it,” interrupted he. “How delightful must be the enjoyment to the unsophisticated palate of those first impressions which a ‘*carpe à la chambord*,’ a pheasant ‘*truffée*,’ a dish of ‘*ortolans à la provençale*’ inspire: but here we are. Our party is a small one — an old préfet of the south, an abbé, a secretary of the Russian embassy, and ourselves.” This information he gave me as we mounted a narrow and winding stair, dimly lighted by a single lamp. On reaching the landing, however, a waiter stood in readiness to usher us into a small apartment decorated with all the luxury of gold and plate glass, so profusely employed in the interior of all *cafés*. The guests already mentioned were there, and evidently awaiting our arrival with no small impatience.

“As usual, Alfred,” said the old man, whom I guessed to be the préfet — “as usual — an hour behind your appointment.”

“Forgive him, Monsieur,” said the abbé, with a simper. “The fascinations of a court —”

The grimace the old man made at this last word threw the whole party into a roar of laughter, which only ceased by the marquis presenting me in all form to each of his friends.

“*à table, à table*, for heaven’s sake,” cried the préfet, ringing the bell, and bustling about the room with a fidgety impatience.

This was, however, unneeded; for in less than five minutes the supper made its appearance, and we took our places at the board.

The encomiums pronounced as each dish came and went, satisfied me that the feast was unexceptionable. As for myself, I eat away, only conscious that I had never been so regaled before, and wondering within me how far ingenuity had been exercised to produce the endless variety that appeared at table. The wine, too, circulated freely; and Champagne, Bourdeaux, and Chambertin followed each other in succession, as the different meats indicated the peculiar vintage. In the conversation I could take no part: it was entirely gastronomic; and no man ever existed more ignorant of the seasons that promised well for truffles, or the state of the atmosphere that threatened acidity to the vines.

"Well, Alfred," said the préfet, when the dessert made its appearance, and the time for concluding the gourmand dissertation seemed arrived — "Well, and what news from the Tuilleries?"

"Nothing — absolutely nothing," said he, carelessly. "The same people; the same topics; the eternal game of tric-trac with old Madame d'Angerton; Denon tormenting some new victim with a mummy or a map of Egypt; Madame Lefevbre relating camp anecdotes —"

"Ah, she is delightful," interrupted the préfet.

"So thinks your chief at least, Askoff," said Beauvais, turning to the Russian. "He sat on the sofa beside her for a good hour and a half."

"Who sat near him on the other side?" slyly asked the other.

"On the other side. I forget — no, I remember it was Monsieur de Talleyrand and Madame Buonaparte; and now I think of it, he must have overheard what they said."

"Is it true then that Buonaparte insulted the English ambassador at the reception? Askoff heard it as he left the Rue St. Honoré."

"Perfectly true. The scene was a most outrageous one; and Lord Whitworth retired, declaring to Talleyrand — at least so they say — that without an apology being made, he would abstain from any future visits at the Tuilleries."

"But what is to come of it? — tell me that; what is to be the result?"

"*Pardieu!* I know not. A reconciliation to-morrow; an article in the *Moniteur*; a dinner at the court; and then another rupture, and another article."

"Or a war," said the Russian, looking cautiously about, to see if his opinion met any advocacy.

"What say you to that, *mon ami*?" said Beauvais, turning to me. "Glad enough I suppose you'll be to win your epaulettes as colonel."

"That, too, is on the cards," said the abbé, sipping his glass quietly: "one can credit any thing these times."

"Even the Catholic religion, abbé," said Beauvais, laughing.

"Or the Restoration," replied the abbé, with a half-malicious look at the préfet, which seemed greatly to amuse the Russian.

"Or the Restoration!" repeated the préfet solemnly after him — "or the Restoration," and then filling his glass to the brim, he drained it to the bottom.

"It is a hussar corps you are appointed to," said Beauvais, hastily turning towards me, as if anxious to engage my attention.

"Yes; the *huitième*," said I: "do you know them?"

"No; I have few acquaintances in the army."

"His father, Sir, said the préfet, with a voice of considerable emphasis, "was an old *garde du corps* in those times when the sword was only worn by gentlemen."

"So much the worse for the army," whispered the abbé in an under tone, that was sufficiently audible to the rest to cause an outbreak of laughter.

"And when," continued the préfet, undisturbed by the interruption, "birth had its privileges."

"Among the rest, that of being the first beheaded," murmured the inexorable abbé.

"Were truffles dear before the Revolution, préfet?" said Beauvais, with a half-impertinent air of simplicity.

"No, Sir; nothing was dear save the king's favour."

"Which could also be had for paying for," quoth the abbé.

"The *Moniteur* of this evening, gentlemen," said the waiter, entering with the paper, whose publication had been delayed some two hours beyond the usual period.

"Ah, let us see what have we here," said Beauvais, opening the journal and reading aloud —

"General Espinasse is appointed to the command of the fourth corps, stationed at Lille, and Major-general Lannes to the fortress of Montreil, vacant by —' No matter — here it is. 'Does the English government suppose that France is one of her Indian

possessions, without the means to declare her wrongs, or the power to avenge them? — can they believe that rights are not reciprocal, and that the observance of one contracting party, involves nothing on the part of the other?"

"There, there, Beauvais; don't worry us with that tiresome nonsense."

"Or," continued the marquis, still reading aloud, "do they presume to say, that we shall issue no commercial instructions to our agents abroad, lest English susceptibility should be wounded by any prospect of increased advantages to our trade."

"Our trade!" echoed the préfet, with a most contemptuous intonation on the word.

"Ah! for those good old times, when there was none!" said the abbé, with such a semblance of honest sincerity as drew an approving smile from the old man.

"Hear this, préfet," said Beauvais: "'From the times of Colbert to the present' — what think you? the allusion, right royal, is it not? — 'From the times of Colbert our negociations have been always conducted in this manner.'"

"Sir, I beseech you read no more of that intolerable nonsense."

"And here," continued the marquis, "follows a special invocation of the benediction of heaven on the just efforts which France is called on to make, to repress the insolent aggression of England — abbé, this concerns you."

"Of course," said he, meekly, "I am quite prepared to pray for the party in power: if heaven but leaves them there, I must conclude they deserve it."

A doubtful look, as if he but half understood him,

was the only reply the old préfet made to this speech; at which the laughter of the others could no longer be repressed, and burst forth most heartily.

“But let us read on. Whose style is this think you? — ‘France possessed within her dominion every nation from the North-sea to the Adriatic, and how did she employ her power? — in restoring to Batavia self-government, in giving liberty to Switzerland, and in ceding Venice to Austria, while the troops at the very gates of Vienna are halted and repass the Rhine once more. Are these the evidences of ambition — are these the signs of that overweening lust of territory with which England dares to reproach us? And if such passions prevailed, what easier than to have indulged them? Was not Italy our own? Were not Batavia, Switzerland, Portugal, all ours? But no, peace was the desire of the nation — peace at any cost. The colony of St. Domingo, that immense territory, was not conceived a sacrifice too great to secure such a blessing.’”

“*Pardieu!* Beauvais, I can bear it no longer.”

“You must let me give you the reverse of the medal. Hear now what England has done.”

“He writes well, at least for the taste of newspaper readers,” said the abbé, musingly; “but still he only understands the pen as he does the sword; it must be a weapon of attack.”

“Who is the writer, then?” said I, in a half whisper.

“Who! — can you doubt it? — Buonaparte himself. What other man in France would venture to pronounce so authoritatively on the prospects and intentions of the nation.”

“Or who,” said the abbé, in his dry manner, “could

“speak with such accuracy of the ‘Illustrious and Magnanimous Chief’ that rules her destinies.”

“It is growing late,” said the préfet, with the air of one who took no pleasure in the conversation, “and I start for Rouen to-morrow morning.”

“Come, come, préfet, one bumper before we part,” said Beauvais; “something has put you out of temper this evening; yet I think I know a toast can restore you to good humour again.”

The old man lifted his hand with a gesture of caution, while he suddenly directed a look towards me.

“No, no; don’t be afraid,” said Beauvais, laughing; “I think you’ll acquit me of any rashness: fill up, then, and here let us drink one in the old palace of the Tuilleries who, at this moment, can bring us back in memory to the most glorious days of our country.”

“*Pardieu!* that must be the first consul, I suppose,” whispered the abbé to the préfet, who dashed his glass with such violence on the table as to smash it in a hundred pieces.

“See what comes of impatience,” cried Beauvais, laughing; “and now you have not wherewithal to pledge my fair cousin the ‘Rose of Provence.’”

“The Rose of Provence,” said each in turn, while, excited by the wine, of which I had drank freely, and carried away by the enthusiasm of the moment, I re-echoed the words in such a tone as drew every eye upon me.

“Ah! you know my cousin then,” said Beauvais, looking at me with a strange mixture of curiosity and astonishment.

“No,” said I, “I have seen her —. I saw her this evening at the palace.”

"Well, I must present you," said he, smiling good-naturedly. Before I could utter my acknowledgment, the party had risen, and were taking leave of each other for the night.

"I shall see you soon again, Burke," said Beauvais, as he pressed my hand warmly; "and now, adieu." With that we parted; and I took my way back towards the Polytechnique, my mind full of the strange incidents of this, the most eventful night in my quiet and monotonous existence.

CHAPTER XXVI.

The "two visits."

AMID all the stirring duties of the next day — amid all the excitement of a new position, my mind recurred continually to the events of the previous twenty-four hours. Now dwelling on the *soirée* at the palace — the unaccustomed splendour, the rank, the beauty I had witnessed; now on that eventful moment I spent behind the screen; then on my strange rencontre with my antagonist, and that still stranger supper that followed it.

It was not indeed without certain misgivings which I could neither account for nor dismiss from my mind, that I reflected on the character and conversation of my new associates.

The tone of levity in which they dared to speak of him whose name was to me something bordering on idolatry — the liberty with which they ventured to canvass his measures and his opinions, even to ridiculing them, were so many puzzles to my mind, and I half reproached myself for having tamely listened to language which now, as I thought over it, seemed to

demand my notice. Totally ignorant of all political intrigue — unconscious that any party did or could exist in France, save that of the first consul himself, I could find no solution to the enigma, and at last began to think that I had been exaggerating to myself the words I had heard, and permitting my ignorance to weigh with me, where, with more knowledge, I should have seen nothing reprehensible; and if the spirit in which they discussed the acts of Buonaparte differed from what I had been accustomed to, might it not rather proceed from my own want of acquaintance with the usages of society, than any deficiency in attachment on their sides. The préfet was, of course, as an officer of the government, no mean judge of what became him — the abbé, too, as a man of education and in holy orders, was equally unlikely to express unbecoming opinions; the Russian scarcely spoke at all; and as for Beauvais, his careless and headlong impetuosity made me feel easy on his score; and so I reasoned myself into the conviction that it was only the ordinary bearing and every-day habit of society, to speak thus openly of one, who, in the narrower limits of our little world, was deemed something to worship.

Shall I own what then I could scarcely have confessed to myself, that the few words Beauvais spoke at parting — the avowed cousinship with her they called “La Rose de Provence” — did much to induce this conviction on my mind; while his promise to present me, was a pledge I could not possibly believe consistent, with any but right loyal thoughts and honest doctrines. Still I would have given any thing for one friend to advise with — one faithful counsellor to aid me: but again was I alone in the world, and, save the short

and not over-flattering reception of my colonel, I had neither seen nor spoken to one of my new corps.

That evening I joined my regiment and took up my quarters in the barracks, where already the rumour of important political events had reached the officers; and they stood in groups discussing the chances of a war, or listening to the *Moniteur*, which was read out by one of the party. What a strange thrill it sent through me to think that I was privy to the deepest secret of that important step on which the peace of Europe was resting — that I had heard the very words as they fell from the lips of him on whom the destiny of millions then depended. With what a different interpretation to me came those passages in the government journal which breathed of peace, and spoke of painful sacrifices to avoid a war, for which already his very soul was thirsting; and how, to my young heart, did that passion for glory exalt him who could throw all into the scale. The proud position he occupied — the mighty chief of a mighty nation — the adulation in which he daily lived — the gorgeous splendour of a court no country in Europe equalled: all these, and more — his future destiny — did he set upon the cast, for the great game his manly spirit gloried in.

In such thoughts as these I lived as in a world of my own; companionship I had none. My brother officers, with few exceptions, had risen from the ranks, and were of that class which felt no pleasure save in the coarse amusements of the barrack-room, or the vulgar jests of the service. The better class lived studiously apart from these, and made no approaches to intimacy with any newly-joined officer with whose family and connexions they were unacquainted; and I, from my change

of country, stood thus alone, unacknowledged and unknown. At first this isolation pained and grieved me, but gradually it became less irksome; and when at length they who had at first avoided and shunned my intimacy, showed themselves disposed to know me, my pride, which before would have been gratified by such an acknowledgment, was now wounded, and I coolly declined their advances.

Some weeks passed in this manner, during which I never saw or heard of Beauvais, and at length began to feel somewhat offended at the suddenness with which he seemed to drop an intimacy begun at his own desire; when one evening, as I had returned to my barrack-room after parade, I heard a knock at my door. I rose and opened it, when, to my surprise, I beheld Beauvais before me; he was much thinner than when I last saw him, and his dress and appearance all betokened far less of care and attention.

"Are these your quarters?" said he, entering and throwing a cautious look about. "Are you alone here?"

"Yes," said I, "perfectly."

"You expect no one?"

"Not any," said I again, still more surprised at the agitation of his manner, and the evident degree of anxiety he laboured under.

"Thank heaven," said he, drawing a deep sigh as he threw himself on my little camp-bed, and covered his face with his hands.

Seeing that something weighed heavily on him, I half feared to interfere with the current of his thoughts, and merely drew my chair and sat down beside him.

"I say, Burke, *mon cher*, have you any wine? Let me have a glass or two, for, save some galette, and

that not the best either, I have tasted nothing these last twenty-four hours." I soon set before him the contents of my humble larder, and in a few moments he rallied a good deal, and, looking up with a smile, said — "I think you have been cultivating *your* education as gourmand since I saw you. That pasty is worthy our friend in the palais royale. Well, and how have you been since we met?"

"Let me rather ask *you*," said I. "You are not looking so well as the last time I saw you. Have you been ill?"

"Ill! no, not ill. Yet I can't say so; for I have suffered a good deal too. No, my friend: I have had much to harass and distress me. I have been traveling, too, long distances and weary ones — met some disappointments, and altogether the world has not gone so well with me as I think it ought; and now of you. What of yourself?"

"Alas!" said I, "if you have met much to annoy, I have only lived a dull life of daily monotony. If it has had little to distress, there is fully as little to cheer; and I half suspect the fine illusions I used to picture to myself of a soldier's career, had very little connexion with reality."

As Beauvais seemed to listen with more attention than such a theme would naturally call for, I gradually was drawn into a picture of my barrack life, in which I dwelt at length on my own solitary position, and the want of that companionship which formed the chief charm of my school-boy life. To all this he paid a marked attention — now questioning me on some unexplained point — now agreeing with me in what I said by a word, or a gesture.

“And do you know, Burke,” said he, interrupting me in my description of those whose early coldness of manner had chilled my first advances — “and do you know,” said he, impetuously, “who these aristocrats are? The sons of honest *bourgeois* of Paris. Their fathers are worthy men of the Rue Vivienne or the Palais — excellent people, I’ve no doubt; but very far better judges of point lace and *pâte de perigord* than disputed precedence and armorial quarterings. Far better the others, the humble soldiers of fortune, whose highest pride is their own daring, their own undaunted heroism. Well, well,” added he, after a pause, “I must get you away from this — I can manage it in a day or two. You shall be sent down to Versailles with a detachment.”

I could not help starting with surprise at these words, and through all the pleasure they gave me, my astonishment was still predominant.

“I see you are amazed at what I say, but it’s not so wonderful as you think. My cousin has only to hint to Madame Buonaparte, who is at present there, and the thing is done.”

I blushed deeply as I thought of the agency through which my wishes were to meet accomplishment, and turned away to hide my embarrassment.

“By-the-by, I have not presented you to her yet. I’ve had no opportunity; but now I shall do so at once.”

“Pray, tell me your cousin’s name,” said I, anxious to say any thing to conceal my confusion. “I’ve only heard her called ‘la Rose de Provence.’”

“Yes, that was a silly fancy of Madame la Consulesse, because Marie is a *Provençale*. But her name

is De Rochfort, at least her mother's name; for, by another caprice, she was forbidden by Buonaparte to bear her father's name. But this is rather a sore topic with me. Let us change it. How did you like my friends the other evening? The abbé is agreeable, is he not?"

"Yes," said I, hesitating somewhat; "but I am so unaccustomed to hear General Buonaparte discussed so freely —"

"That absurd Polytechnique!" interrupted Beauvais. "How many a fine fellow has it spoiled with its ridiculous notions and foolish prejudices!"

"Come, come," said I, "you must not call prejudices the attachment which I, and all who wear an epaulette, feel in our glorious chief. There, there — don't laugh, or you'll provoke me; for if I, an alien, feel this, how should you, who are a Frenchman born, sympathize with such a proud career?"

"If you talk of sympathy, Burke, let me ask you — have you ever heard speak of a certain old family of these realms, who have been driven forth and expatriated to seek a home among strangers, themselves the descendants of the fairest chivalry of our land — the proud scions of Saint Louis? — and has your sympathy never strayed across sea, to mingle with *their* sorrows." His voice trembled as he spoke, and a large tear filled and tracked its way along his cheek, as the last word vibrated on his tongue; and then, as if suddenly remembering how far he had been carried away by momentary impulse, he added, in an altered voice — "But what have we to do with these things? Our road is yet to be travelled by either of us. Yours a fair path enough, if it only fulfil its early promise.

The fortunate fellow that can win his grade while yet a school-boy —”

“How came you to know —?”

“Oh! I know more than that, Burke; and believe me, if my foolish conduct, the first day we met, had led to any thing disastrous, I should have passed a life of sorrow for it ever after; but we shall have time enough to talk over all these matters in the green alleys of Versailles, where I hope to see you before a week be over. Great events may happen ere long, too. Burke, you don't know it, but I can tell you, a war with England is at this moment on the eve of declaration.”

“Perhaps,” said I, somewhat piqued by the tone of superiority in which he had spoken for some minutes, and anxious to assume for myself a position which, I forgot, conferred no credit by the manner of its attainment, “I know more of *that* than you are aware of.”

“Oh,” replied he carelessly, “the gossip of a mess is but little to be relied on. The ‘*sabreurs*’ will always tell you that the order to march is given.”

“I don't mean that,” said I, haughtily. “My information has a higher source — the highest of all — General Buonaparte himself.”

“How! — what! — Buonaparte himself!”

“Listen to me,” said I; and, hurried on by a foolish vanity, and a strange desire, I cannot explain, to make a confidant in what I felt to be a secret too weighty for my own bosom, I told him all that I had overheard when seated behind the screen in the *salon* at the Tuilleries.

“You heard this — you yourself?” cried he, as

his eyes flashed, and he grasped my arm with an eager grip.

"Yes, with my own ears I heard it," said I, half trembling at the disclosure I made, and ready to give all I possessed to recall my words.

"My friend, my dear friend," said he impetuously, "you must hesitate no longer — be one of us."

I started at the words, and, growing pale with agitation as the very thought of the importance of what I had related flashed across me, I stammered out — "Take care what you propose to me, Beauvais. I do not, I cannot fathom your meaning now; but if I thought that any thing like treachery to the first consul — that any thing traitorous to the great cause of liberty for which he has fought and conquered was meditated, I'd go forthwith and tell him, word for word, all I have spoken now, even though the confession would, as it might, humble me for ever, and destroy all my future hope of advancement."

"And be well laughed at for your pains, foolish boy," said he, throwing himself back in his chair, and bursting out into a fit of laughter. "No, no, Burke, you must not do any thing half so ridiculous, or my pretty cousin could never look at you without a smile ever after; and à propos of that — when shall I present you? That splendid jacket and all that finery of Dolman there will make sad work of her poor heart."

I blushed deeply at the silly impetuosity I had betrayed myself into, and muttered some equally silly apology for it; still, young as I was, I could perceive that my words made no common impression on him, and would have given my best blood to recall them.

"Do you know, Beauvais," said I, affecting as much of coolness as I could — "do you know, I half regret having told you this. The manner in which I heard this conversation — though, as you will see, quite involuntary on my part — should have prevented my ever having repeated it; and now the only reparation I can make is, to wait on my colonel, explain the whole circumstance, and ask his advice."

"In plain words, to make public what at present is only confided to a friend. Well, you think the phrase too strong for one you have seen but twice — the first time not exactly on terms such as warrant the phrase. But come, if you can't trust me, I'll see if I can't trust you.

He drew at these words a roll of paper from his pocket, and was proceeding to open it on the table, when a violent knocking was heard at my door.

"What's that — who can it be?" said he, starting up, and growing pale as death.

The look of terror in his face appalled me, and I stood, not able to reply, or even move towards the door, when the knocking was repeated much louder, and I heard my name called out; pointing to a closet which led from the room, and without speaking a word, I walked forward and unlocked the door; a tall man, wrapped in a blue cloak, and wearing a cocked hat covered with oil skin, stood before me, accompanied by a sergeant of my troop.

"This is the sous lieutenant, Sir," said the sergeant, touching his cap.

"That will do," replied the other; "you may leave us now." Then turning to me, he added — "May I have the favour of a few minutes' conversation with

you, Mr. Burke? I am Monsieur Gisquet, *chef de police* of the department."

A trembling ran through me at the words, and I stammered out something scarce audible in reply. Monsieur Gisquet followed me as I led the way into my room, which already had been deserted by Beauvais, and casting a quick glance around, he leisurely took off his hat and cloak and drew a chair towards the table.

"Are we alone, Sir?" said he, in a measured tone of voice, while his eye fell with a peculiar meaning on a chair which stood opposite to mine, on the opposite side of the stove.

"I had a friend with me when you knocked," I muttered in a broken and uncertain accent; "but perhaps —" before I could finish my sentence the door of the cabinet slowly opened, and Beauvais appeared, but so metamorphosed, I could scarcely recognise him; for short as the interval was, he had put on my old uniform of the Polytechnique, which, from our similarity in height, fitted him perfectly.

"All safe, Tom," said he, stealing out, with an easy smile on his countenance. "*Par St. Denis!* I thought it was old Lagrange himself come to look for me. Ah, Monsieur, how d'ye do? You have given me a rare fright to-night. I came to spend the day with my friend here, and as ill luck would have it, have outstaid my time. The *école* closes at nine, so that I'm in for a week's arrest at least."

"A cool confession this, Sir, to a minister of police," said Gisquet, sternly, while his dark eyes surveyed the speaker from head to foot.

"Not when that minister is called Monsieur Gis-

quet," said he, readily, and bowing courteously as he spoke.

"You know me then?" said the other, still peering at him with a sharp look.

"Only from your likeness to a little boy in my company," said he; — "Henri Gisquet; a fine little fellow he is, and one of the cleverest in the school."

"You are right, Sir; he is my son," said the minister, as a pleased smile passed over his swarthy features. "Come, I think I must get you safe through your dilemma. Take this; the officer of the night will be satisfied with the explanation, and Monsieur Le-grange will not hear of it."

So saying, he seized a pen, and writing a few lines rapidly on a piece of paper, he folded it note fashion and handed it to Beauvais.

"A handsome ring, Sir," said he, suddenly, and holding the fingers within his own; "a very costly one too."

"Yes, Sir," said Beauvais, blushing scarlet. "A cousin of mine —"

"Ha, ha! an *amourette* too. Well, well, young gentleman, no need of further confessions. Lose no more time here — *bon soir*."

"Adieu, Burke," said Beauvais, shaking my hand with a peculiar pressure.

"Adieu, Monsieur Gisquet. This order will pass me through the barrack, won't it?"

"Yes; to be sure. You need fear no interference with my people either, go where you will this evening."

"Thanks, Sir, once more," said he, and departed.

"Now for our business, Mr. Burke," said the mi-

nister, opening his paquet of papers before him, and commencing to con over its contents. "I shall ask you a few questions, to which you will please to reply with all the accuracy you can command, remembering that you are liable to be called on to verify any statement hereafter on oath. With whom did you speak on the evening of the second of May, at the soirée of Madame Buonaparte?"

"I scarcely remember if I spoke to any one save madame herself; a strange gentleman, whose name I know not, presented me; one or two others also unknown to me may have spoken a passing word or so; and when coming away I met Monsieur de Beauvais."

"Monsieur de Beauvais! who is he?"

"*Ma foi*, I can't tell you. I saw him the day before for the first time: we renewed our acquaintance, and we supped together."

"At Beauvilliers'," said he, interrupting?

"*Pardieu!* Monsieur," said I, somewhat stung at the 'espionage' on my movements, "you seem to know every thing so well already, it is quite needless to interrogate me any further."

"Perhaps not," replied he coolly. "I wish to have the names of the party you supped with."

"Well, there was one who was called the préfet, a large, full, elderly man."

"Yes, yes, I know him," interrupted Gisquet again; "and the others?"

"There was an abbé, and a secretary of the Russian mission."

"No other?" said he, in a tone of disappointment.

"No one, save Beauvais and myself — we were but five in all."

"Did no one come in during the evening?"

"No, not any."

"Nor did any leave the party?"

"No; we separated at the same moment."

"Who accompanied you to the barracks?"

"No one. I returned alone."

"And this Monsieur Beauvais; you can't tell any thing of him? What age is he? what height?"

"About my own," said I, blushing deeply at the thought of the events of a few moments back. "He may be somewhat older; but he looks not much more than twenty-one or two."

"Have you mentioned any of these circumstances to any of your brother officers or to your colonel?"

"No, Sir, never."

"Very right, Sir. These are times in which discretion is of no common importance. I have only to recommend similar circumspection in future. It is probable that some of these gentlemen may visit you and write to you — they may invite you to sup or to dine; if so, Sir, accept the invitation; be cautious, however, not to speak of this interview to any one. Remember, Sir, I am the messenger of one who never forgave a breach of trust, but who also never fails to reward loyalty and attachment. If you be but prudent, Mr. Burke, your fortune is certain."

With these words, Monsieur Gisquet threw his cloak over his shoulder, and raising his hat, he bowed formally to me, and withdrew, leaving me to meditations which, I need not say, were none of the happiest.

If my fears were excited by the thought of the acquaintances I had so rashly formed; so also was my

pride insulted by the system of watching to which my movements had been subjected; and deeper still, by the insulting nature of the proposal the minister of police had not scrupled to make to me, and which only, on reflecting over, did I perceive how base and dishonourable it was.

“What!” asked I of myself, “is it a spy — is it a false underhand betrayer of the men into whose society I have been admitted on terms of friendly intercourse he would make of me? What saw he in me or in my actions, to dare so far? Was not the very cloth I wear enough to guard me against such an insult?” Then came the maddening reflection — “Why had I not thought of this sooner? Why had I not rejected his proposal with scorn, and told him, that I was not of the stuff he looked for?”

But, what was it that he wished to learn? and who were these men, and what were their designs? These were questions that flashed across me, and I trembled to think how deeply implicated I might become at any moment, in plans of which I knew nothing — merely from the imprudence with which I had made their acquaintance — the escape of Beauvais, if discovered, would also inevitably involve me, and thus did I seem hurried along by a train of incidents, without will or concurrence, each step but increasing the darkness around me.

That Gisquet knew most of the party was clear, Beauvais alone seemed personally unknown to him. What then did he want of me? Alas! it was a tangled web I could make nothing of — and all I could resolve on, was to avoid in future all renewal of intimacy with Beauvais, to observe the greatest circumspection with

regard to all new acquaintance — and since the police thought it worth their while to set spies upon my track — to limit my excursions, for some time at least, to the routine of my duty, and the bounds of the barrack-yard. These were wise resolutions — and if somewhat late in coming, yet not without their comfort; above all — because, in my heart I felt no misgivings of affection, no lack of loyalty to him who was still my idol.

Well, well, thought I, something may come of this — perhaps a war — if so, happy shall I be to leave Paris and all its intrigues behind me, and seek distinction in a more congenial sphere, and under other banners than a police minister would afford me.

With thoughts like these I fell asleep, to dream over all the events of the preceding day, and wake the next morning with an aching head, and confused brain — my only clear impression being, that some danger hung over me, but from what quarter, and how, or in what way it was to be met or averted, I could not guess.

The whole day I felt a feverish dread lest Beauvais should appear. Something whispered me that my difficulties were to come of my acquaintance with him, and I studiously passed my time among my brother officers, knowing that, so long as I remained among them, he was not likely to visit me; and when evening came, I gladly accepted an invitation to a barrack-room supper, which, but the night before, I should have declined without hesitation.

This compliance on my part seemed well taken by my companions, and in their frank and cordial reception of me, I felt a degree of reproach to myself, for my

having hitherto lived estranged from them. We had just taken our place at table, when the door was flung wide open, and a young captain of the regiment rushed in, waving a paper over his head, as he called out —

“Good news, *mes braves*, glorious news for you! Listen to this — the English ambassador has demanded his passports, and left Paris; expresses are sent off to the fourth corps, to move towards the coast; twelve regiments have received orders to march; so that before my lord leaves Calais, he may witness a review of the army.”

“Is this true?”

“It is all certain.”

“Read it, here’s the *Moniteur*, with the official announcement.”

In an instant a dozen heads were bent over the paper, each eager to scan the paragraph so long and ardently desired.

“Come, Burke, I hope you have not forgotten your English,” said the major; “we shall want you soon to interpret for us in London, if, *pardieu*, we can ever find our way through the fogs of that ill-starred island.”

I hung my head without speaking — the miserable isolation of him who has no country, is a sad and sickening sense of want, no momentary enthusiasm, no impulse of high daring can make up for. Happily for me, all were too deeply interested in the important news to remark me, or pay any attention to my feelings.

CHAPTER XXVII.

The march to Versailles.

THEY who remember the excited state of England on the rupture of the peace of Amiens — the spirit of military ardour that animated every class and condition of life — the national hatred, carried to the highest pitch by the instigations and attack of a violent press, can yet form but an imperfect notion of the mad enthusiasm that prevailed in France on the same occasion.

The very fact that there was no determinate and precise cause of quarrel, added to the exasperation on both sides. It was less like the warfare of two great nations, than the personal animosity of two high-spirited and passionate individuals, who, having interchanged words of insult, resolve on the sword as the only arbiter between them.

All that the long rivalry of centuries, national dislike, jealousy in every form, and ridicule in a thousand shapes, could suggest, were added to the already existing hate, and gave to the coming contest a character of the blackest venom. In England, the tyrannic rule of Buonaparte gave deep offence to all true lovers of liberty, and gave rise to fears of what the condition of their own country would become, should he continue to increase his power by conquest. In France, the rapid rise to honour and wealth, the career of arms so singularly favoured, made partizans of war in every quarter of the kingdom. The peaceful arts were but mean pursuits compared with that royal road to rank and riches, the field of battle; and their self-interest lent its share in forming the spirit of hostility, which wanted no element of hatred to make it perfect.

Paris, where so lately nothing was heard save the roll of splendid equipages — the din of that gay world whose business is amusement — where amid gilded *salons* the voluptuous habits of the Consulate, mixed with the less courtly but scarce less costly display of military splendour, became now like a vast camp. Regiments poured in daily to resume their march the next morning; the dull rumble of ammunition-waggons and caissons — the warlike clank of mounted cavalry awoke the citizen at day-break; the picquets of hussar corps and the dusty and travel-stained infantry soldiers filled the streets at nightfall: yet through all, the mad gaiety of this excited nation prevailed. The cafés were crowded with eager and delighted faces; the tables spread in the open air, were occupied by groups, whose merry voices and ready laughter attested that war was the pastime of the people, and the very note of preparation — a tocsin of joy and festivity. The walls were placarded with inflammatory addresses to the patriotism and spirit of France. The papers teemed with artful and cleverly-written explanations of the rupture with England, in which every complaint against that country was magnified, and every argument put forward to prove the peaceful desires of that nation, whose present enthusiasm for war was an unhappy commentary on the assertion. The good faith of France was extolled — the moderation of the first consul dwelt upon; and the treachery of that “perfidious Albion that respected not the faith of treaties,” was displayed in such irrefragible clearness, that the humblest citizen thought the cause his own, and felt the coming contest the ordeal of his own honour.

All the souvenirs of the former wars were invoked

to give spirit to the approaching struggle; and they were sufficiently numerous to let no week pass over without at least one eventful victory to commemorate.

Now it was Kellerman's cuirassiers, whose laurel-wreathed helmets reminded the passing stranger, that on that day eight years they tore through the dense ranks of the Austrians, and sabred the gunners at the very guns. Now it was the Polish regiments — the steel-clad lancers — who paraded before the Tuilleries, in memory of the proud day they marched through Montebello with that awful sentence on their banners, "Venice exists no longer." Here were corps of infantry, intermingled with dragoons, pledging each other as they passed along; while the names of Castiglione, Bassano, and Roveredo rang through the motley crowd — the very children, "*les enfants de troupe*," seemed filled with the warlike enthusiasm of their fathers; and each battalion, as it moved past, stepped to the encouraging shouts of thousands, who gazed with envious admiration on the heroes of their country.

Never did the pent-up feelings of a nation find vent in such a universal torrent of warlike fervour as now filled the land. The clank of the sabre was the music that charmed the popular ear; and the "coquette vivandière," as she tripped along the gravel avenues of the Tuilleries gardens, was as much an object of admiration as the most splendidly-attired beauty of the "Faubourg St. Germain." The whole tone of society assumed the feature of the political emergency. The theatres only represented such pieces as bore upon the ancient renown of the nation in arms — its victories and conquests. The artists painted no other subjects; and the literature of the period appealed to few other

sympathies than are found in the rude manners of the guard-room, or around the watch-fires of the bivouac. Pigault Lebrun was the popular author of the day; and his works are even now no mean indication of the current tastes and opinions of the period.

The predictions too hastily made by the English journals that the influence of Buonaparte in France could not survive the rupture of that peace which had excited so much enthusiasm, were met by a burst of national unanimity, that soon dispelled the delusive hope. Never was there a greater error than to suppose that any prospect of commercial prosperity, any vista of wealth and riches, could compensate to Frenchmen for the intoxication of that glory on which they lived as in an orgie. Too many banners floated from the deep aisles of the "Invalides;" too many cannon, the spoils of the Italian and German wars, bristled on the rampart, not to recall the memory of those *fête* days when a bulletin threw the entire city into a frenzy of joy. The Louvre and the Luxembourg, too, were filled with the treasures of conquered states, and these are not the guarantees of a long peace.

Such in brief was the state of Paris, when the declaration of war by Great Britain once more called the nation to arms. Every regiment was at once ordered to make up its full complement to the war standard, and the furnaces were employed in forging shot and casting cannon throughout the length and breadth of France. The cavalry corps were stationed about St. Omer and Compiègne, where a rich corn country supplied forage in abundance. Among the rest the order came for the *huitième* to march, one squadron only

was to remain behind, chosen to execute *le service des dépêches* from St. Cloud and Versailles to Paris, and to this I belonged.

From the evening of Monsieur Gisquet's visit I had never seen or heard of Beauvais, and at last the hope grew in me that we were to meet no more, when suddenly the thought flashed across my mind; this is what he spoke of! he promised I should be sent to Versailles! Can it be chance, or is this his doing? These were difficult questions to solve, and gave me far more embarrassment than pleasure. My fears that my acquaintance with him was in the end to involve me in some calamity, was a kind of superstition which I could not combat, and I resolved at once to see my colonel, with whom happily I was now on the best of terms, and endeavour to exchange with some other officer, any, being willing to accept a post so much more agreeable than a mere country quarter. I found the old man busied in the preparations for departure, he was marking out the days of march to the adjutant as I entered.

"Well, Burke," said he, "you are the fortunate fellow this time; your troop remains behind."

"It is on that account, Sir, I am come. You'll think my request a strange one, but if it be not against rule, would you permit me to exchange my destination with another officer."

"What — eh! the boy's mad. Why it's to Versailles you are going."

"I know, Sir, but somehow I'd rather remain with the regiment."

"This is very strange, I don't understand it," said he leisurely. "Come here." With that he drew me

into the recess of a window where we could talk unheard by others. "Burke," continued he, "I'm not the man to question my young fellows about secrets which they'd rather keep for themselves; but there is something here more than common. Do you know that in the order, it was your squadron was specially marked out, all the officers' names were mentioned, and yours particularly, for Versailles?"

A deadly paleness and a cold sick chill spread over my face; I tried to say some commonplace, but I could not utter more than the words, "I feared it." Happily for me he did not hear them, but taking my hand kindly said —

"I see it all, some youthful folly or other would make you better pleased to leave Paris just now. Never mind, stormy times are coming, you'll have enough on your hands presently, and let me advise you to make the most of your time at Versailles, for if I'm not mistaken, you'll see much more of camps than courts for some time to come."

The rest of that day left me but little time for reflection; but in such short intervals as I could snatch from duty, one thought ever rose to my mind. Can this be Beauvais' doing? Has he had any share in my present destination, and with what object? Well, said I to myself at last, these are but foolish fears after all, and may be causeless ones. If I but follow the straight path of my duty, what need I care if the whole world intrigued and plotted around me. And after all, was it not most likely that we should never see each other again?

The day was just breaking when we left Paris; the

bright beams of a May morning's sun were flickering and playing in the rippling river that ran cold and grey beneath — the tall towers of the Tuilleries threw their long shadows across the Place Carousel, where a dragoon regiment was encamped: they were already astir, and some of the men were standing around the fountains with their horses, and others were looking after the saddles and accoutrements in preparation for the march; a-half expiring fire here and there marked where some little party had been sitting together, while the jars and flasks about bespoke a merry evening. A trumpeter sat, statue-like, on his white horse, his trumpet resting on his knee, surveying the whole scene, and as if deferring to the last the wakeful summons that should rouse some of his yet sleeping comrades. I could see thus much as we passed. Our road led along the quay towards the Place Louis XV. where an infantry battalion with four guns were picquetted. The men were breakfasting and preparing for the route. They were part of the *grande armée* under orders for Boulogne.

We soon traversed the Champs Elysées, and entered the open country; for some miles it was merely a succession of large corn fields, and here and there a small vineyard that met the eye on either side; but as we proceeded farther we were girt in by rich orchards in full blossom, the whole air loaded with the perfume. Neat cottages peeped from the woody enclosures, the trelliced walls covered with honeysuckles and wild roses; the surface, too, was undulating and waved in every imaginable direction, offering every variety of hill and valley, precipice and plain, in even the smallest space. As yet no peasant was stirring, no smoke curled

from a single chimney, and all, save the song of the lark, was silent. It was a peaceful scene, and a strong contrast to that we left behind us; and whatever ambitious yearnings filled my heart, as I looked upon the armed ranks of the mailed cuirassiers, I felt a deeper sense of happiness as I strayed along those green alleys, through which the sun came slanting sparingly, and where the leaves only stirred as their winged tenants moved among them.

We travelled for some hours through the dark paths of the Bois de Boulogne, and again emerged in a country wild and verdant as before. And thus passed our day, till the setting sun rested on the tall roof of the great palace, and lit up every window in golden splendour as we entered the town of Versailles.

I could scarce avoid halting as I rode up the wide terrace of the palace; — never had I felt before the overcoming sense of grandeur which architecture can bestow; the great *façade* in its chaste and simple beauty, stretched away to a distance, where dark lime trees closed the back-ground, their tall summits only peeping above the lofty terrace in which the chateau stands. On that terrace, too, were walking a crowd of persons of the court — the full dress costume showing that they had but left the *salons* to enjoy the cool and refreshing air of the evening. I saw some turn and look after our travel-stained and dusty party, and confess I felt a half sense of shame at our way-worn appearance. I had not long to suffer such mortification, for ere we marched more than a few minutes we were joined by a *Maréchal de Logis*, who accompanied us to our quarters, one of the buildings

adjoining the palace, where we found every thing in readiness for our arrival; and there I, to my surprise, discovered that a most sumptuous supper awaited me — a politeness I was utterly a stranger to, not being over cognizant of the etiquette and privilege which await the officer on guard at a royal palace.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

The park of Versailles.

THE instructions delivered to me soon after my arrival in Versailles convinced me that the transmission of despatches was not the service we were called on to discharge, but merely a pretence to blind others as to our presence, the real duty being the establishment of a cordon around the royal palace, permitting no one to enter or pass within the precincts who was not provided with a regular leave, and empowering us to detain all suspected individuals, and forward them for examination to St. Cloud.

To avoid all suspicion as to the true object, the men were ordered to pass from place to place, as if with despatches, many being stationed in different parts of the park, my duty requiring me to be continually on the alert to visit these picquets, and make a daily report to the préfet of police at Paris.

What the nature of the suspicion, or from what quarter Monsieur Savary anticipated danger, I could not even guess; and though I well knew that his sources of information were unquestionable, I began at last to think that the whole was merely some plot devised by the police themselves to display uncommon vigilance and enhance their own importance. This conviction grew stronger as, day by day, I remarked

that no person more than ordinary had even approached near the town of Versailles itself, while the absurd exactitude of inquiry as to every minute thing that occurred, went on just as before.

While my life passed on in this monotonous fashion, the little court of Madame Buonaparte seemed to enjoy all its accustomed pleasure. The actors of the *Français* came down expressly from Paris, and gave nightly representations in the palace; *fourgons* continued to arrive from the capital with all the luxuries for the table; new guests poured in day after day, and the lighted-up saloons, and the sounds of music that filled the court, told each evening that whatever fear prevailed without, the minds of those within the palace had little to cause depression.

It was not without a feeling of wounded pride I saw myself omitted in all the invitations; for although my rank was not sufficient of itself to lead me to expect such an attention, my position as the officer on guard would have fully warranted the politeness, had I not even already received marks of civility while in Paris. From time to time, as I passed through the park, I came upon some of the court party, and it was with a sense of painful humiliation I observed that Madame Buonaparte had completely forgotten me, while from one, whose indifference was more galling still, I did not even obtain a look in passing. How had I forfeited the esteem which voluntarily they had bestowed on me — the good opinion which had raised me from an humble cadet of the Polytechnique to a commission in one of the first corps in the service? Under what evil influence was I placed? Such were the questions that forced themselves on me night and day — that haunted

my path as I walked, and my dreams at night. As the impression grew on me I imagined that every one I met regarded me with a look of distance and distrust — that each saw in me one who had forfeited his fair name by some low or unworthy action, till at last I actually avoided the walks where I was likely to encounter the visitors of the palace, and shunned the very approach of a stranger like a guilty thing. All the brilliant prospects of my soldier's life that a few days back shone out before me, were now changed into a dreamy despondence; the service I was employed on, so different from what I deemed became a chivalrous career, was repugnant to all my feelings; and when the time for visiting my picquets came, I shrunk with shame from a duty that suited rather the spy of the police, than the officer of hussars.

Every day my depression increased: my isolation, doubly painful from the gaiety and life around me, seeming to mark me out as one unfit to know, lessened me in my own esteem; and as I walked the long, dark alleys of the park, a weighty load upon my heart, I envied the meanest soldier of my troop, and would willingly have changed his fortune with my own. It was a relief to me even when night came — the shutters of my little room closed; my lamp lighted — to think that there at least I was free from the dark glances and side-long looks of all I met; that I was alone with my own sorrow, no contemptuous eye to pierce my sad heart, and see in my gloom a self-convicted criminal. Had I one, but one friend to advise with, to pour out all my sufferings before him and say, "Tell me how shall I act? am I to go on enduring? or where shall I — where can I vindicate my fame?"

With such sad thoughts for company, I sat one evening alone; my mind now recurring to the early scenes of my childhood, and to that harsh teaching which even in infancy had marked me for suffering; now straying onward to a vision of the future I used to paint so brightly to myself, when a gentle tap at the door aroused me.

"Come in," said I carelessly, supposing it a sergeant of my troop. The door slowly opened, and a figure wrapped in a loose horseman's cloak entered.

"Ah! lieutenant, don't you know me?" said a voice, whose peculiar tone struck me as well known. "The Abbé D'Ervan, at your service."

"Indeed!" said I, starting with surprise, not less at the unexpected visitor himself than at the manner of his appearance. "Why, abbé, you must have passed the sentinel."

"And so I did, my dear boy," replied he, as he folded up his cloak leisurely on one chair, and seated himself on another opposite me. "Nothing wonderful in that, I suppose."

"But the countersign — they surely asked you for it?"

"To be sure they did, and I gave it: 'Vincennes,' an easy word enough. But come, come, you are not going to play the police with me. I have taken you in on my way back to St. Cloud, where I am stopping just now, to pay you a little visit and talk over the news."

"Pardon me once more, my dear abbé, but a young soldier may seem over punctilious. — Have you the privilege to pass through the royal park after night-fall?"

“I think I have shown you that already, my most rigid inquisitor, otherwise I should not have known the password. Give me your report for to-morrow. Ah, here it is. What’s the hour now? A quarter to eleven. This will save you some trouble,” so saying, he took a pen and wrote in a large, free hand, “The Abbé D’Ervan from the Chateau D’Ancre to St. Cloud.” “Monsieur Savary will ask you no further questions, trust me. And now, if you have got over all your fears and disquietudes, may I take the liberty to remind you that the chateau is ten leagues off — that I dined at three, and have eaten nothing since. Abbés, you are aware, are privileged gastronomists; and the family of D’Ervan have a most unhappy addiction to good things. A poulet, however, and a flask of chablis will do for the present; for I long to talk with you.”

While I made my humble preparations to entertain him, he rambled on in his usual free and pleasant manner — that mixture of smartness and carelessness which seemed equally diffused through all he said, imparting a sufficiency to awake, without containing any thing to engage too deeply, the listener’s attention.

“Come, come, lieutenant, make no apology for the fare: the *pâté* is excellent; and as for the Burgundy, it is easy enough to see your chambertin comes from the consul’s cellar. And so you tell me that you find this place dull, which I own I’m surprised at. These little *soirées* are usually amusing; but perhaps at your age the dazzling gaiety of the ball-room is more attractive.”

“In truth, abbé, the distinction would be a matter of some difficulty to me, I know so little of either;

and, indeed, Madame la Consulesse is not over likely to enlighten my ignorance. I have never been asked to the palace."

"You are jesting, surely."

"Perfectly in earnest, I assure you. This is my third week of being quartered here; and not only have I not been invited, but stranger still, Madame Buona-partte passed and never noticed me; and another, one of her suite, did the same: so you see there can be no accident in the matter."

"How strange," said the abbé, leaning his head on his hand; and then, as if speaking to himself, muttered — "But so it is, there is no such tyrant as your *parvenu*. The caprice of sudden elevation knows no guidance. And you can't even guess at the cause of all this?"

"Not with all my ingenuity could I invent any thing like a reason."

"Well, well, we may find it out yet. These are strange times altogether, lieutenant. Men's minds are more unsettled than ever they were. — The Jacobin begins to feel he has been labouring for nothing: that all he deems the rubbish of a monarchy, has been removed, only to build up a greater oppression. The soldier sees his conquests have only made the fortune of one man in the army, and that one not over-mindful of his old companions. Many begin to think, and they may have some cause for the notion, that the old family of France knew the interests of the nation best after all; and certain it is, they were never ungrateful to those who served them. Your countrymen had always their share of favour shown them. — You do surprise me, when you say you've never been invited."

"So it is though; and worse still, there is evidently some secret reason. Men look at me as if I had done something to stain my character and name."

"No, no, you mistake all that. This new and patchwork court does but try to imitate the tone of its leader. When did you see Beauvais?"

"Not for some months past. Is he in Paris?"

"No. The poor fellow has been ill. He's in Normandy just now, but I expect him back soon. There is a youth who might be any thing he pleased: his family, one of the oldest in the south; his means abundant; his own ability first-rate; but his principles are of that inflexible material that won't bend for mere convenience sake. He does not like — he does not approve of the present government of France."

"What would he have then? Does not Buonaparte satisfy the ambition of a Frenchman? Does he wish a greater name than that at the head of his nation?"

"That's a brilliant lamp before us; but see there," cried the abbé, as he flung open the shutter, and pointed to the bright moon that shone pale and beautiful in the clear sky — "see there. Is there not something grander far in the glorious radiance of the orb that has thrown its lustre on the world for ages? Is it not a glorious thought to revel in the times long past, and think of those, our fathers, who lived beneath the same bright beams, and drank in the same golden waters. Men are too prone to measure themselves with one of yesterday. — They find it hard to wonder at the statue of him, whom they have themselves placed on the pedestal. — Feudalism too seems a very part of our nature."

"These are thoughts I've never known, nor would

I now wish to learn them," said I; "and as for me, a hero needs no ancestry to make him glorious in my eyes."

"All true," said the abbé, sipping his glass, and smiling kindly on me; "a young heart should feel as yours does; and time was when such feelings had made the fortune of their owner; but even now the world is changed about us. The gendarme have the mission that once belonged to the steel-clad cuirassiers, and, in return, the hussar is little better than a '*mouchard*.'"

The blood mounted to my face and temples, and throbbed in every vein and artery of my forehead, as I heard this contemptuous epithet applied to the corps I belonged to — a sarcasm that told not less poignantly on me, that I felt how applicable it was to my present position.

He saw how deeply mortified the word had made me; and putting his hand in mine, and with a voice of winning softness he added — "One who would be a friend must risk a little now and then; as he who passes over a plank before his neighbour, will sometimes spring to try its soundness, even at the hazard of a fall. Don't mistake me, lieutenant, you have a higher mission than this. France is on the eve of a mighty change. Let us hope it may be a happy one. And now it's getting late — far later indeed than is my wont to be abroad — and so I'll wish you good night. I'll find a bed in the village. And since I have made you out here, we must meet often."

There was something — I could not define what exactly — that alarmed me in the conversation of the abbé; and lonely and solitary as I was, it was with a sense of relief I saw him take his departure.

The pupil of a school where the consul's name was never mentioned without enthusiasm and admiration, I found it strange that any one should venture to form any other estimate of him than I was used to hear; and yet in all he said, I could but faintly trace out any thing to take amiss. That men of his cloth should feel warmly towards the exiled family was natural enough. They could have but few sympathies with the soldier's calling, and, of course, felt themselves in a very different position now from what they once had occupied. The restoration of catholicism was, I well knew, rather a political and social than a religious movement; and Buonaparte never had any, the slightest intention of replacing the church in its former position of ascendancy, but rather of using it as a state engine, and giving a stability to the new order of things, which could only be done on the foundation of prejudices and convictions, old as the nation itself.

In this way the rising generation looked on the priests; and in this way had I been taught to regard the whole class of religionists. It was then nothing wonderful if ambitious men among them, of whom D'Ervan might be one, felt somewhat indignant at the post assigned them, and did not espouse with warmth the cause of one who merely condescended to make them the tool of his intentions. "Yes, yes," said I to myself, "I have divined my friend the abbé; and though not a very dangerous character after all, it's just as well I should be on my guard. His being in possession of the password, and his venturing to write his name in the police report, are evidences that he enjoys the favour of the préfet of police. Well, well, I'm sure I am heartily tired of such reflections. Would that the

campaign were once begun. — The roll of a platoon and the deep thunder of an artillery fire would soon drown the small whisperings of such miserable plottings from one's head."

About a week passed over after this visit, in which, at first, I was rather better pleased that the abbé did not come again; but as my solitude began to press more heavily on me, I felt a kind of regret at not seeing him. His lively tone in conversation, though spiced with that "*moqueur*" spirit which Frenchmen nearly all assume, amused me greatly; and little versed as I was in the world or in its ways, I saw that he knew it thoroughly. Such were my thoughts as I returned home one evening along the broad alley of the park, when I heard a foot coming rapidly up behind me.

"I say, lieutenant," cried the voice of the very man I was thinking of, "your people are terribly on the alert to-night: they refused to let me pass, until I told them I was coming to you; and here are two worthy fellows who won't take my word for it without your corroboration."

I then perceived that two dismounted dragoons followed him at the distance of a few paces.

"All right, men," said I, passing my arm beneath the abbé's, and turning again towards my quarters. "Wouldn't they take the password then?" continued I, as we walked on.

"*Ma foi!* I don't know, for I haven't got it."

"How — not got it?"

"Don't look so terribly frightened, my dear boy, you'll not be put under arrest or any such mishap on my account; but the truth is. I've been away some

days from home, and have not had time to write to the minister for the order; and as I wanted to go over to St. Cloud this evening, and as this route saves me at least a league's walking, of course I availed myself of the privilege of our friendship both to rest my legs and have a little chat with you. Well, and how do you get on here now? I hope the chateau is more hospitable to you — eh — not so? — that is most strange. But I have brought you a few books which may serve to while away the hours; and as a recompense, I'll ask you for a supper."

By this time we were at the door of my quarters, where having ordered up the best repast my *cuisine* afforded, we sat down to await its appearance. Unlike the former evening, the abbé now seemed low and depressed — spoke little, and then moodily over the unsettled state of men's minds, and the rumours that pervaded Paris of some momentous change — men know not what. And thus by a stray phrase, a chance word, or an unfinished sentence, gave me to think that the hour was approaching for some great political convulsion.

"But, lieutenant, you never told me by what accident you came first amongst us. Let me hear your story. The feeling with which I ask is not the fruit of an impertinent curiosity. I wish sincerely to know more about one in whose fortunes I have taken deep interest. Beauvais told me the little anecdote which made you first acquainted; and though the event promised but little of future friendship, the circumstances have turned differently. You have not one who speaks and thinks of you more highly than he does. I left him this morning not many miles from this. And now

that I think of it, he gave me a letter for you — here it is;" so saying, he threw it carelessly on the chimney-piece, and continued — "I must tell you a secret of poor Beauvais, for I know you feel interested in him. You must know, then, that our friend is desperately in love with a very beautiful cousin of his own, one of the suite of Madame Buonaparte. She's a well-known court beauty; and if you had seen more of the Tuilleries, you'd have heard of La Rose de Provence."

"I have seen her, I think," muttered I, as my cheek grew crimson, and my lips trembled.

"Well," resumed the abbé, and without noticing my embarrassment, "this love affair, which I believe began long ago, and might have ended in marriage — for there is no disparity of rank, no want of wealth, nor any other difficulty to prevent it — has been interrupted by General Buonaparte, because, and for no other reason, mark ye, than that Beauvais' family were Bourbonists. His father was a captain of the Garde du Corps, and his grandfather a grand falconer, or something or other, with Louis XV. Now, the young marquis was well enough inclined to go with the current of events in France. The order of things once changed, he deemed it best to follow the crowd, and frequented the Tuilleries like many others of his own politics — I believe you met him there. — Till one morning lately he resolved to try his fortune where the game was his all: and he waited on Madame Buonaparte to ask her consent to his marriage with his cousin — for I must tell you that she is an orphan, and in all such cases the parental right is exercised by the head of the government. Madame referred him coldly to the general, who received him more coldly still, and instead of replying

to his suit, as he expected, broke out into invectives against Beauvais' friends — called them *chouans* and assassins — said they never ceased to plot against his life with his most inveterate enemies, the English — that the exiled family maintained a corps of spies in Paris, of whom he half suspected him to be one, and in a word contrived to heap more of insult on him in one quarter of an hour than, as he himself said, his whole family had endured from the days of St. Louis to the present. Beauvais from that hour absented himself from the Tuilleries, and indeed almost entirely from Paris: now living with his friends in Normandy, now spending a few weeks in the south; but at last he has determined on his course, and means to leave France for ever. I believe the object of his coming here at this moment is to see his cousin for the last time. Perhaps his note to you has some reference to it."

I took the letter with a trembling hand — a fear of something undefined was over me — and, tearing it open, read as follows: —

"DEAR FRIEND — The Abbé D'Ervan will deliver this into your hands, and, if you wish it, explain the reason of the request it contains, which is simply that you will afford me the shelter of your quarters for one day in the park at Versailles. I know the difficulty of your position; and if any other means under heaven presented itself I should not ask the favour, which, although I pledge my honour not to abuse, I shall value as the dearest a whole life's gratitude can repay. My heart tells me that you will not refuse the last wish of one you will never see after this meeting. I shall wait at the gate below the Trianon at eleven

o'clock, on Friday night, when you can pass me through the sentries.

"Yours, ever and devoted,

"HENRI DE BEAUVAIS."

"The thing is impossible," said I, laying down the letter on the table, and staring over at D'Ervan.

"No more so, dear friend, than what you have done for me this evening, and which, I need not tell you, involves no risk whatever. Here am I now, without pass or countersign, your guest — the partaker of as good a supper, and as excellent a glass of wine as man need care for. In an hour hence — say two at most — I shall be on my way over to St. Cloud. Who is then, I ask you, to be the wiser? You'll not put me down in the night report — don't start — I repeat it — you can't do it; for I had no countersign to pass through: and as the consul reads these sheets every morning, you are not going to lose your commission for the sake of an absurd punctilio that nobody on earth will thank you for. Come, come, my worthy lieutenant, these same excellent scruples of yours savour far more of the scholar at the rigid old Polytechnique than the young officer of hussars. Help me to that ortolan there, and pass the bottle. There — a bumper of such a vintage is a good reward for so much talking."

While the abbé continued to exert himself by many a flippant remark, and many a smart anecdote, to dissipate the gloom that now fell over my spirits, I grew only more and more silent. The one false step I had taken already presented itself before me as the precedent for further wrong, and I knew not what course to take, nor how to escape from my dilemma.

"I say, lieutenant," said D'Ervan, after a pause of some minutes, during which he had never ceased to regard me with a fixed, steady stare, "you are about as unlike the usual character of your countrymen as one can well conceive."

"How so," said I, half smiling at the remark.

"All the Irishmen I have ever seen," replied he, "and I have known some scores of them, were bold, dashing, intrepid fellows, that cared nothing for an enterprise if danger had no share in it — who loved a difficulty as other men love safety — who had an instinct for where their own reckless courage would give them an advantage over all others, and took life easily, under the conviction that every day could present the circumstance where a ready wit and a stout heart could make the way to fortune. Such were the Irish I knew in the Brigade; and though not a man of the number had ever seen what they called the green island, they were as unlike English, or French, or Germans, or any other people, as — as the old court of Louis XIV. was like the guard-room style of reception that goes on now-a-days yonder."

"What you say may be just," said I coolly; "and if I seem to have few features of that headlong spirit which is the gift of my nation, the circumstances of my boyhood could well explain, perhaps excuse them. From my earliest years I have had to struggle against ills that many men, in a long lifetime, do not meet with. If suspicion and distrust have crept or stolen into my heart, it is from watching the conduct of those I deemed high-spirited and honourable, and seeing them weak, and vacillating, and faithless. And lastly, if every early hope that stirred my heart does but

wane and pale within me, as stars go out when day is near, you cannot wonder that I who stand alone here, without home or friend, should feel a throb of fear at aught which may tarnish a name that has as yet no memory of past services to rely upon. And if you knew how sorely such emotions war against the spirit that lives here, believe me you had never made the reproach — my punishment is enough already.”

“Forgive me, my dear boy, if I said any thing could wound you for a moment,” said the abbé. “This costume of mine, they say, gives a woman’s privilege, and truly I believe it does something of the sex’s impertinence, also. I ought to have known you better, and I do know you better by this time. And now let me press a request I made some half an hour ago — tell me this same story of yours. I long to learn something of the little boy where I feel such affection for the man.”

The look of kindness and the tone of soothing interest that accompanied these words I could not resist; so, drawing my chair close towards him, I began the narrative of my life. He listened with the most eager attention to my account of the political condition of Ireland, questioned me closely as to my own connection with the intrigues of the period; and when I mentioned the name of Charles de Meudon, a livid paleness overspread his features as he asked in a low hollow tone if I were with him when he died?

“Yes,” replied I, “by his bed-side.”

“Did he ever speak to you of me? — did he ever tell you much of his early life when in Provence?”

“Yes, yes, he spoke often of those happy days in the old chateau, where his sister, on whom he doated

to distraction, was his companion. Hers was a sad story too. Strange, is it not, I have never heard of her since I came to France?"

A long pause followed these words, and the abbé leaned his head upon his hand, and seemed to be lost in thought.

"She was in love with her cousin," I continued, "and Charles unhappily refused his consent. Unhappily I say, for he wept over his conduct on his death-bed."

"Did he?" cried the abbé, with a start, while his eye flashed fire, and his nostrils swelled and dilated like a chafed horse. "Did he do this?"

"Yes, bitterly he repented it; and although he never confessed it, I could see that he had been deceived by others, and turned from his own high-souled purpose respecting his sister. I wonder what became of Claude — he entered the church."

"Ay, and lies there now," replied the abbé, sternly.

"Poor fellow! is he dead, too? and so young."

"Yes. He contrived to entangle himself in some Jacobite plot."

"Why, he was a royalist."

"So he was. It might have been another conspiracy then — some Chouan intrigue. Whatever it was the government heard of it; he was arrested at the door of his own *presbytère*; the grenadiers were drawn up in his own garden; and he was tried, condemned, and shot in less than an hour. The officer of the company eat the dinner that was preparing for him."

"What a destiny! and Marie de Meudon —"

"Hush! the name is proscribed. The De Meudons professed strong royalist opinions, and Buonaparte would

not permit her bearing her family name. She is known by that of her mother's family, except by those poor minions of the court, who endeavour with their *fade* affectation to revive the graceful pleasantries of Marie Antoinette's time, and they call her La Rose de Provence."

"La Rose de Provence," cried I, springing up from my chair, "the sister of Charles!" while a thrill of ecstasy ran through my frame, followed the moment after by a cold, faint feel; and I sank almost breathless in the chair.

"Ha!" cried the abbé, leaning over me, and holding the lamp close to my face, "what —;" and then, as he resumed his place, he slowly muttered between his teeth, "I did not dream of this."

Not a word was now spoken by either. The abbé sat mute and motionless, his eyes bent upon the floor, and his hands clasped before him. As for me, every emotion of hope and fear, joy and sorrow, succeeded each other in my mind; and it was only as I thought of Beauvais once more that a gloomy despair spread itself before me, and I remembered that he loved her, and how the abbé hinted his passion was returned.

"The day is breaking," said D'Ervan, as he opened the shutter and looked out; "I must away. Well, I hope I may tell my poor friend Beauvais, that you'll not refuse his request. Charles de Meudon's sister may have a claim on your kindness too."

"If I thought that she —"

"You mean, that she loved him. You must take his word for that. She is not likely to make a confidant of you; besides, he tells you it's a last meeting. You can scarcely say nay. Poor girl, he is the only one remaining to her of all her house. With his de-

parture you are not more a stranger here, than is she in the land of her fathers."

"I'll do it, I'll do it," cried I, passionately. "Let him meet me where he mentioned. I'll be there."

"That's as it should be," said the abbé, grasping my hand, and pressing it fervently; "but come, don't forget you must pass me through this same cordon of yours."

With a timid and shrinking heart I walked beside the abbé across the open terrace, towards the large gate, which with its bronzed and gilded tracery was already shining in the rich sunlight.

"A fine-looking fellow that dragoon yonder; he's decorated, I see."

"Yes; an old hussar of the guard."

"What's he called?"

"Pierre Dulong; a name well known in his troop."

"*Halte-là!*" cried the soldier, as we approached.

"Your officer," said I.

"The word?"

"Arcole."

"Pass, 'Arcole,' and good morrow."

"Adieu, lieutenant — adieu, Pierre," said the abbé, as he waved his hand and passed out.

I stood for a minute or two uncertain of purpose; why, I know not. The tone of the last few words seemed uttered in something like a sneer. "What folly though!" said I to myself. "D'Ervan is a strange fellow, and it is his way."

"We shall meet soon, abbé," I cried out, as he was turning the corner of the park wall.

"Yes, yes, rely on it we shall meet — and soon."

He kept his word.

CHAPTER XXIX.

La Rose de Provence.

THE one thought that dwelt in my mind the entire day was, that Marie de Rochfort was Charles de Meudon's sister. The fact once known, seemed to explain that secret power she exercised over my hopes and longings. The spell her presence threw around ever as she passed me in the park; that strange influence with which the few words I had heard her speak still remained fast-rooted in my memory: all these did I attribute to the hold her name had taken of my heart, as I sat night after night listening to her brother's stories. And then why had I not guessed it earlier? why had I not perceived the striking resemblance which it now seemed impossible to overlook? the dark eye beaming beneath a brow squarely chiselled like an antique cameo; the straight nose and short up-turned lip, where a half-saucy look seemed struggling with a sweet smile; and then the voice, was it not his own rich southern accent, tempered by her softer nature? Yes; I should have known her. In reflections like these I made my round of duty; my whole heart wrapped up in this discovery. I never thought of Beauvais, or his letter. It seemed to me as though I had known her long and intimately; she was not the Rose de Provence of the court; the admired of the Tuilleries; the worshipped belle of Versailles, but Marie de Meudon, the sister of one who loved me as a brother.

There was a dark alley near the Trianon that led along the side of a little lake, where rocks and creeping plants rudely grouped together, gave a half-wild aspect

to the scene. The tall beech and the drooping ash trees that grew along the bank threw their shadows far across the still water; and here I had remarked that Mademoiselle de Meudon came frequently alone. It was a place, from its look of shade and gloom, little likely to attract the gay visitors of the court, who better loved the smoothly-shaven grass of the palace walks, or the broad terraces where bright fountains were plashing. Since I discovered that she avoided me when we met, I had never taken this path on my rounds, although leading directly to one of my outposts, but preferred rather a different and longer route. Now, however, I sought it eagerly, and as I hurried on, I dreaded lest my unwonted haste might excite suspicion. I resolved to see and speak to her. It was her brother's wish that I should know her; and till now I felt as though my great object in coming to France was unobtained, if I knew not her whose name was hallowed in my memory. Poor Charles used to tell me she would be a sister to me. — How my heart trembled at the thought. As I drew near I stopped to think how she might receive me; with what feelings hear me speak of one who was the cause of all her unhappiness; but then they said she loved Beauvais. What! was poor Claude forgotten? was all the love-dream of her first affection past? My thoughts ran wild as different impulses struggled through them, and I could resolve on nothing. Before me, scarcely a dozen paces and alone, she stood, looking on the calm lake, where the light in golden and green patches played, as it struggled through the dense foliage. The clattering of my sabre startled her, and without looking back, she dropped her veil and moved slowly on.

"Mademoiselle de Meudon," said I, taking off my *shako*, and bowing deeply before her.

"What! how! Why this name, Sir? Don't you know it's forbidden here?"

"I know it, Madame; but it is by that name alone I dare to speak to you; it was by that I learned to know you — from one who loved you, and who did not reject my humble heart — one who, amid all the trials of hard fate, felt the hardest to be — the wrong he did his sister."

"Did you speak of my brother Charles?" said she, in a voice low and tremulous.

"I did, Madame. The last message his lips ever uttered was given to me, and for you. Not until last night did I know that I was every hour of the day so near to one whose name was treasured in my heart."

"Oh, tell me of him — tell me of my dear Charles," cried she, as the tears ran fast down her pale cheeks. "Where was his death? Was it among strangers that he breathed his last? Was there one there who loved him?"

"There was, there was," cried I passionately, unable to say more.

"And where was that youth that loved him so tenderly? I heard of him as one who never left his side — tending him in sickness, and watching beside him in sorrow. Was he not there?"

"I was; I was. My hand held his. In my ear his last sigh was breathed."

"Oh! was it you indeed who were my brother's friend?" said she, seizing my hand and pressing it to her lips. The hot tears dropped heavily on my wrist, and in my ecstasy I knew not where I was. "Oh!"

cried she passionately, "I did not think that in my loneliness such a happiness as this remained for me. I never dreamed to see and speak to one who knew and loved my own dear Charles; who could tell me of his solitary hours of exile. What hopes and fears stirred that proud heart of his; who could bring back to me in all their force again the bright hours of our happy youth, when we were all to each other; when our childhood knew no greater bliss, than that we loved. Alas! alas! how short-lived was it all. He lies buried beyond the sea in the soil of the stranger, and I live on to mourn over the past, and shudder at the future; but come, let us sit down upon this bank. — You must not leave me till I hear all about him. Where did you meet first?"

We sat down upon a grassy bench beside the stream, where I at once began the narrative of my first acquaintance with De Meudon. At first the rush of sensation that came crowding on me made me speak with difficulty and effort. The flutter of her dress as the soft wind waved it to and fro; the melody of her voice, and her full, languid eye, where sorrow and long-buried affection mingled their expression, sent thrilling through my heart thoughts that I dared not dwell upon. Gradually, as I proceeded, my mind recurred to my poor friend, and I warmed as I spoke of his heroic darings and his bold councils. All his high-souled ardour; all the nobleness of his great nature; his self-devotion and his suffering were again before me, mingled with those traits of womanly softness which only belong to those whose courage is almost fanaticism. How her dark eyes grew darker as she listened, and her parted lips and her fast-heaving bosom betrayed the agitation

that she felt; and how that proud look melted into sorrow when I told of the day when his outpouring heart recurred to home, and her — the loved one of his boyhood.

Every walk in that old terraced garden; each grassy alley, and each shady seat I knew as though I saw them. Although I did not mention Claude, nor even distantly allude to the circumstances which led to their unhappiness, I could see that her cheek became paler and paler, and that despite an increased effort to seem calm, the features moved with a slight jerking motion; her lip trembled convulsively, and with a low, sad sigh she fell back fainting.

I sprang down the bank towards the lake, and in an instant dipped my *shako* in the water, and as I hastened back, she was sitting up — her eyes staring madly round her — her look wild almost to insanity, while her outstretched finger pointed to the copse of low beech near us.

“There, there; I saw him,” said she. “He was there now. Look, look.” Shocked at the terrified expression of her features, and alarmed lest my story had conjured up before her disordered imagination the image of her lost brother, I spoke to her in words of encouragement. “No, no,” replied she to my words, “I saw *him*; I heard *his* voice, too. Let us leave this. Bring me to the Trianon; and —” The terrified and eager look she threw around at each word did not admit of longer parley, and I drew her arm within mine to lead her forward. “This is no fancy, as you deem it,” said she, in a low and broken tone, to which an accent of bitterness lent a terrible power, “nor could the grave give up before me one so full of terror to my

heart as him I saw there." Her head sank heavily as she uttered this, and notwithstanding every effort I made, she spoke no more, nor would give me any answer to my questions regarding the cause of her fears. As we walked forward, we heard the sound of voices, which she at once recognised as belonging to the court party, and pressing my hand slightly, she motioned me to leave her. I pressed the pale finger to my lips, and darted away. My every thought bent on discovering the cause of her late fright. In an instant I was back beside the lake; I searched every copse and every brake; I wandered for hours through the dark woods, but nothing could I see. I stooped to examine the ground, but could not even detect the pressure of a footstep. The dried branches lay unbroken, and the leaves unpressed around, and I at last became convinced that an excited brain, and a mind harassed by long sorrow, had conjured up the image she spoke of. As I approached the picquet, which was one of the most remote in my rounds, I resolved to ask the sentry had he seen any one.

"Yes, lieutenant," said the soldier; "a man passed some short time in an undress uniform; he gave the word, and I let him proceed."

"Was he old or young?"

"Middle-aged, and of your height."

"Which way did he take?"

"He turned towards the left as he passed out, I lost sight of him then."

I hurried immediately onward, and entered the wood by the path in the direction mentioned. My mind painfully excited by what I heard, and resolved to do every thing to probe this matter to the bottom; but though

I walked miles in every direction, I met none save a few faggot-gatherers, and they had not seen any one like him I sought for. With a weary and a heavy heart I turned towards my quarters. All the happiness of my morning dashed by the strange event I have related; my night was feverish and disturbed; for a long time I could not sleep, and when I did, wild and terrible fancies came on me, and I started up in terror. A horrible face recurred at every instant to my mind's eye; and even when awake the least noise, the slightest rustling of the leaves in the park agitated and excited me. At last, worn out with the painful struggle between sleep and waking, I arose and dressed. The day was breaking, and already the birds were carolling to the rising sun. I strolled out into the park. — The fresh and bracing air of morning cooled my burning brow; the mild influences of the sweet hour when perfumes float softly in the dew-loaded breeze soothed and calmed me; and I wandered back in thought to her who already had given a charm to my existence I never knew before.

The long-wished-for dream of my boyhood was realized at last. I knew the sister of my friend. I sat beside her, and heard her speak to me in tones so like his own. I was no longer the friendless alien, without one to care for — one to feel interested in his fortunes. The isolation that pressed so painfully on me, fled before that thought; and now I felt raised in my own esteem by those dark eyes that thanked me as I spoke of poor Charles. What a thrill that look sent through my heart. Oh, did she know the power of that glance! Could she foresee what seeds of high ambition her very smile was sowing! The round of my duty was to me

devoid of all fatigue, and I returned to my quarters with a light step, and a lighter heart.

The entire day I lingered about the Trianon, and near the lake, but Marie never came, nor did she appear in the walks at all. Was she ill — had the vision, whatever it was, of yesterday preyed upon her health — were my first thoughts; and I inquired eagerly if any doctor had been seen about the chateau; but no — nothing unusual seemed to have occurred, and a ball was to take place that very evening. I would have given worlds, were they mine, even to know in what part of the palace she was lodged; and fifty times did I affect to have some duty, as an excuse to cross the terrace, and steal a cautious glance towards the windows — but in vain!

So engrossed was my mind with thoughts of her, that I forgot all else. The picquets too I had not visited since day-break, and my report to the minister remained unfilled. It was late in the evening when I sallied forth to my duty, and night, with scarce a star, was falling fast. My pre-occupation prevented my feeling the way as I walked along; and I had already visited all the outposts except one, when a low, faint whistle, that seemed to issue from the copse near me, started me; it was repeated after a moment, and I called out —

“Who’s there? — Advance.”

“Ah! I thought it was you, Burke,” said a voice, I at once knew to be Beauvais’. “You broke faith with me at the town-gate yonder, and so I had to come down here.”

“How? you surely were not there when I passed?”

“Yes, but I was, though. Did you not see the

wood-cutter with his blouse on his arm, lighting his pipe at the door of the guard-house?"

"Yes; but you can't mean that it was you."

"Do you remember his saying, 'Buy a cheap *charrette* of wood, lieutenant. I'll leave it at your quarters?'"

"Beauvais," said I gravely, "these risks may be fatal to us both. My orders are positive, and if I disobey them, there are no powerful friends nor high relatives to screen me from a deserving punishment."

"What folly you speak, Burke. If I did not know you better I should say you grudged me the hospitality I have myself asked you for. One night to rest — and I need it much, if you knew but all — and one day to speak to Marie, and you have done with me. Is that too much?"

"No; not if I did not betray a trust in sheltering you, far too little to speak of, much less thank me for; but —"

"Do spare me these scruples, and let us take the shortest way to your quarters: a supper, and three chairs to sleep on, are worth all your arguments, eloquent though they be."

We walked on together, almost in silence: I overwhelmed with fear for the result should my conduct ever become known; he evidently chagrined at my reception of him, and little disposed to make allowances for scruples he would not have respected himself.

"So here we are at last," said he, as he threw himself on my little sofa, seemingly worn out with exhaustion. I had now time to look at him by the light, and almost started back at the spectacle that presented itself: his dress, which was that of the meanest peasant,

was ragged and torn; his shoes scarce held together with coarse thongs, and his beard unshaven for weeks past, increased the haggard look of features, where actual want and starvation seemed impressed. "You are surprised at my costume," said he, with a sad smile; "and certes, Crillac would not court a customer habited as I am just now; but what will you say when I assure you that the outward man — and you will not accuse him of any voluptuous extravagance — has a very great advantage over the inner one? In plain words, lieutenant, you'd hurry your cook, if you knew I have not tasted food, save what the hedges afford, for two days; not from poverty neither; there's where-withal there to dine, even at Beauvilliers'." He rattled a well-filled purse as he spoke.

"Come, come, Beauvais, you accuse me of doing the honours with a bad grace; and in truth, I wish I were your host outside the picquets; but let me retrieve my character a little. — Taste this capon."

"If you never dined with a wolf, you shall now," said he, drawing his chair to the table and filling a large goblet with burgundy. For ten or fifteen minutes he eat on like a man whom long starvation had rendered half savage; then ceasing suddenly, he looked up and said — "Lieutenant, the cuisine here might tempt a more fastidious man than I am; and if these people are not hospitable enough to invite you to their *soirées*, they certainly do not starve you at home."

"How knew you that I was not asked to the chateau?" said I, reddening with a sense of offended pride I could not conceal.

"Know it! — Why, man, these things are known at once; people talk of them in saloons and morning

visits, and comment on them in promenades; and though I seem not to have been keeping company with the *beau monde* latterly, I hear what goes on there too. But trust me, boy, if your favour stands not high with the court of to-day, you may perhaps be preparing the road to fortune with that of to-morrow."

"Though you speak in riddle, Beauvais, so long as I suspect that what you mean would offer insult to those I serve, let me say, and I say it in all temper, but in all firmness, you'll find no ready listener in me. The highest favour I aspire to, is the praise of our great chief General Buonaparte, and here I pledge his health."

"I'll drink no more wine to-night," said he, sulkily pushing his glass before him. Is this to be my bed?"

"Of course not; mine is ready for you; I'll rest on the sofa there; for I shall have to visit my picquets by day-break."

"In heaven's name, for what?" said he, with a half sneer. "What can that poor Savary be dreaming of? Is there any one about to steal the staircase of the Louvre, or the clock from the pavilion of the Tuilleries — or is it the savants of the Institute he's afraid of losing?"

"Rail on, my good friend, you'll find it very hard to make an old scholar of the Polytechnique think poorly of the man that gains battles."

"Well, well, I give up my faith in physiognomy. Do you remember that same evening in the Tuilleries, when I asked your pardon, and begged to be your friend, I thought you a different fellow then from what I see you now; that silly hussar pelisse has turned many a head before yours."

"You wish to make me angry, Beauvais, and you'll not succeed. A night's rest will bring you to better temper with all the world."

"Will it, faith! in that case a tolerably large portion of it must take leave of it before morning; for I promise you, my worthy hussar, there are some I don't expect to feel so very charitably towards as you expect."

"Well, well, what say you to bed?"

"I'll sleep where I am," said he, with some harshness in his tone.

"Good night." The words were scarcely uttered when he turned on his side, and, shading his eyes from the light with his hand, fell fast asleep.

It was already past midnight, and as I was fatigued with my day's walking, I soon retired to my bed, but not to rest. Whenever I closed my eyes, Beauvais' pale and worn face seemed before me — the haggard expression of suffering and privation; and then I fell to thinking what enterprise of danger could involve him in such necessities as these. It must be one of peril, or he had not become what now I saw him: his very voice was changed; its clear, manly tone was now harsh and dissonant; his frank and cheerful look was downcast and suspicious.

At last, worn out with thinking, I fell asleep, but was suddenly awakened by a voice shouting from the outer room. I sat up and listened. It was Beauvais, calling wildly for help; the cry grew fainter, and soon sank into the long-drawn respiration of repose. Poor fellow! even in his dreams his thoughts were of strife and danger.

CHAPTER XXX.

A "warning."

THE day was just breaking when I was up and stirring, resolving to visit the picquets before Beauvais awoke, for even still the tone of ridicule he assumed was strong before me. I passed stealthily through the room where he was still sleeping: the faint light streamed through the half-closed shutters, and fell upon a face so pale, so haggard, and so worn, that I started back in horror. How altered was he, indeed, from what I had seen him first! The cheek once ruddy with the flush of youth, was now pinched and drawn in; the very lips were bloodless, as if not illness alone, but long fasting from food, had pressed upon him. His hair, too, which used to fall upon his shoulders and on his neck in rich and perfumed locks, silky and delicate as a girl's, was now tangled and matted, and hung across his face and temples, wild and straggling. Even to his hands his changed condition was apparent; for they were torn and bleeding: while in the attitude of sleep, you could trace the heavy unconscious slumber of one utterly worn out and exhausted. His dress was of the coarse stuff the peasants wear in their blouses, and even that seemed old and worn. What strange career had brought him down to this I could not think; for poor as all seemed about him, his well-stocked purse showed that this costume was worn rather for disguise than necessity. Such was my first thought; my second, more painful still, recurred to her he loved, by whom he was, perhaps, beloved in turn. Oh! if any thing can add to the bitter smart of jealousy, it is the dreadful conviction that she for whom our heart's best blood

would flow to ensure one hour of happiness, has placed her whole life's fortune on the veriest chance, bestowing her love on one whose life gives no guarantee for the future — no hope, no pledge, that the world's wildest scheme of daring and ambition are not dearer to his eyes than all her charms and affections. How does our own deep devotion come up before us contrasted with this! and how, in the consciousness of higher motives and more ennobling thoughts, do we still feel inferior to him, who, if poor in all besides, is rich in her love. Such envious feelings filled my heart as I looked on him; and with slow, sad step I moved on, when by accident I came against a chair, and threw it down. The noise awoke him, and with a spring he was on his legs, and, drawing a pistol from his bosom, cried out —

“Ha! — what is 't? Why, Burke, it's you! What hour is it?”

“Not four yet. I'm sorry to have disturbed you, Beauvais; but the chair here —”

“Yes, yes, I placed it so last night. I felt so very heavy that I could not trust myself with waking to a slight noise. Where to, so early? Ah! these picquets — I forgot.” And with that he lay down again, and before I left the house, was fast asleep once more.

Some trifling details of duty detained me at one or two of the outposts, and it was beyond my usual time when I turned homeward. I had but just reached the broad alley that leads to the foot of the great terrace, when I saw a figure before me hastening onward towards the chateau. The flutter of the dress showed it to be a woman, and then the thought flashed on me — it was Mademoiselle de Meudon. Yes, it was her step — I

knew it well. She had left the palace thus early to meet Beauvais. Without well knowing what I did, I had increased my speed, and was now rapidly overtaking her, when the noise of my footsteps on the ground made her turn about and look back. I stopped short suddenly. An indistinct sense of something culpable on my part, in thus pursuing her, flitted across my mind, and I could not move. There she stood, too, motionless; but for a second or two only, and then beckoned to me with her hand. I could scarcely trust my eyes, nor did I dare to stir till she had repeated the motion twice or thrice.

As I drew near, I remarked that her eyes were red with weeping, and her face pale as death. For a moment she gazed steadfastly at me, and then, with a voice whose accent I can never forget, she said —

“And you, too, the dearest friend of my own Charles, whose very death-bed spoke of loyalty to him, how have you been drawn from your allegiance?”

I stood amazed and astounded, unable to utter a word in reply, when she resumed —

“For them there is reason, too. They lived, or their fathers did, in the sunshine of the old monarchy. Wealth, rank, riches, power — all were theirs; but you, who came amongst us with high hopes of greatness, where others have earned them on the field of battle — whose very youth is a guarantee that base and unworthy thoughts should form no part of his motives, and whose high career began under the very eyes of him, the idol of every soldier’s heart — oh, why turn from such a path as this, to dark and crooked ways, where low intrigue, and plot, and treachery, are better

weapons than your own stout heart, and your own bright sword?"

"Hear me, I pray you," said I, bursting into impatience — "hear me but one word, and know that you accuse me wrongfully. I have no part, nor have I knowledge of any treason."

"Oh, speak not thus to me. There are those who may call their acts by high-sounding titles, and say — 'We are but restoring our own sovereigns to the land they owned;' but you are free to think and feel. No prestige of long years blinds your reason, or obstructs your sense of right."

"Once more I swear, that though I can but guess at where your suspicions point, my faith is now as true, my loyalty as firm, as when I pledged myself at your dear brother's side to be a soldier."

"Then why have you mixed yourself with their intrigues? Why are you already suspected? Why has Madame Buonaparte received orders to omit your name in all the invitations to the chateau?"

"Alas! I know not. I learn now, for the first time, that suspicion ever attached to me."

"It is said, too — for already such things are spoken of — that you know that dreadful man, whose very presence is contamination. Oh! does it not seem like fate, that his dark path should traverse every portion of my destiny?"

The sobs that burst from her at these words seemed to rend her very bosom.

"They say," continued she, while her voice trembled with strong emotion — "they say he has been here."

"I know not of whom you speak," said I, as a cold chill ran through my blood.

"Mehée de La Touche," replied she, with an effort.

"I never heard of him till now — the very name is unknown to me."

"Thank God for this," muttered she between her teeth. "I thought perhaps that Beauvais had made you known to each other."

"No: Beauvais never introduced me, save to some friends of his one evening at a supper, several months back; and only one of them have I ever seen since, an Abbé D'Ervan: and indeed if I am guilty of any breach of duty, I did not think the reproach was to come from you."

The bitterness of these last words was wrung from me in a moment of wounded pride.

"How! what mean you?" said she impetuously. "No one has dared to call my fidelity into question, nor speak of me, as false to those who cherish and protect me."

"You mistake my meaning," said I, sadly and slowly: then hesitating how far I should dare allude to Beauvais' affection, I stopped, when suddenly her face became deeply flushed, and a tear started to her eye. "Alas, she loves him," said I to my heart, and a sickness like death passed over me.

"Leave me — leave me quickly," cried she. "I see persons watching us from the terrace:" and with that, she moved on hastily towards the chateau, and I turned into one of the narrow walks that led into the wood.

Two trains of thought struggled for mastery in my mind — how had I become suspected, how should I wipe out the stain upon my honour.

There was not an incident of my life since my landing

in France I did not call to mind; and yet, save in the unhappy meeting with Beauvais, I could see not the slightest probability that even malevolence could attach any thing to my reputation. From D'Ervan, it is true, I heard more than once opinions that startled me; less, however, by any thing direct in their meaning, than that they were totally new and strange; and yet, the abbé I had every reason to believe was a friend of the present government, at least it was evident he was on terms of close intimacy with Monsieur Savary.

Beauvais must clear up some of these doubts for me, thought I — he must inform me more particularly as to those to whom he introduced me. I shall endeavour to learn, too, something of their schemes, and thus guard myself against the mere chances of suspicion, for unquestionably he is not in ignorance of the movement, whatever it be; and with such intentions I hurried onwards, eager to reach my quarters.

As I entered my room, a low heavy sob broke on my ear; I started back with surprise. It was Beauvais, who sat, his head buried in his hands, leaning on the table.

“Ha!” said he, springing up, and passing his hand hurriedly across his eyes — “so soon back. I scarcely expected you.”

“It is past ten o’clock — a full hour later than my usual return.”

“Indeed!” rejoined he, with an air of impertinent surprise. “So then your picquets have been arresting and detaining some poor devils gathering faggots or acorns; or have you unfathomed the depth of this terrible plot your préfet of police has become insane about?”

"Neither," said I, affecting a careless tone. "The government of the consul is sufficiently strong to make men's minds easy on that score. Whatever intrigues are at work, they are as little likely to escape his keen eye, as their perpetrators are, when taken, the fire of a grenadier company."

"*Ma foi*, Sir, you speak confidently," replied he, in an accent of pride, totally different from his former tone. "And yet I have heard of persons just as confident too, who afterwards confessed they had been mistaken. But perhaps it seems less strange to you that a sous-lieutenant of artillery should rule the destinies of France, than that the king of the country should resume the throne of his ancestors."

"Take care, Beauvais, with whom you speak. I warn you; and be assured I'll not be trifled with. One word more, and I put you under arrest."

"Not here, surely," replied he, in a low and searching voice. "Not here. Let us walk out into the park — let it be in the great alley, or on the terrace yonder; or better still, let the capture take place in the wood: but do not let your loyalty violate the hospitality of your home."

"Forgive me, I pray. — I knew not what I said. — You tempted me sorely, though. Think but for a moment, Beauvais, how I stand here, and let your own heart judge me. I am an alien — a friendless stranger. There lives not one in all the length and breadth of France who would raise a finger, or speak one word to save me, were my head in peril. My sword and my fidelity are all my hope: that both should remain pure and unblemished is all my wish. The grade I have, I owe to him —"

“Great cause for gratitude, truly,” he broke in. “The chief *élève* of the Polytechnique is made a sous-lieutenant of cavalry, with functions of a sergeant of the *gensdarmierie*, with orders to stop all travellers, and search their pockets. Shame on it! It was not thus the rightful sovereigns of France regarded those who wore their epaulettes — not thus did they esteem the soldier’s part. Think, for a second, what you are, and then reflect what you might be. Cold and unimpassioned as you call yourself, I know your heart better. There lives not one treasures a higher ambition in his breast than you. Ah! your eyes sparkle already. Think, then, I say, what a career opens before you, if you have courage to embrace it. It’s a great game that enables a man to spring from sous-lieutenant to colonel of a regiment. — Come, Burke, I can have no reason, save your welfare, to press these considerations on you. What are you writing there?”

“A report to the *préfet* of police. I see now, however late it is, the unworthiness of the part I’ve acted, in remaining in a service where I’ve listened to statements such as these. I shall ask to have my grade withdrawn, and be reduced to the ranks; there, perhaps, I may be permitted to carry a soldier’s musket without a stain upon my honour.”

“You can do better, Sir,” interrupted he, as his face grew purple with passion, and his eyes flashed fire — “far better: call up your dragoons yonder, and place me, where you threatened, under arrest; forward your report to the minister, that Henri de Beauvais, Marquis et Pair de France, when such things were, has been taken with the ‘*Croix de St. Louis*’ and the *cordon* in his possession.” Here he took from his

bosom the decoration, and waved it above his head. "Add, too, that he came prepared to tempt your loyalty with this." He drew forth at the words a parchment document, and dashed it on the table before me.

"There, Sir, read it; it is the king's own handwriting — your brevet of colonel to a regiment of the gardes. Such proofs of your devotion can scarcely go unrewarded. They may raise you to the rank of police spy. There is a lady yonder, too, who should also share in your elevation, as she does in your loyal sentiments — Mademoiselle de Meudon may be too quick for you. Lose no time, Sir; such chances as these are not the fruit of every day. After all, I can scarcely go to the guillotine under better auspices, than with my cousin and my *friend* as my betrayers. Mayhap, too, they'll do you the honour to make you mount guard beside the scaffold. Such an occasion to display your devotion should not escape you. David found it profitable to catch the expiring agonies of his own friends, as with easel and brush he sat beside the guillotine. The hint should not be lost."

The insulting emphasis with which he spoke the last words cut me to the very heart, and I stood speechless before him, trembling like a criminal.

"Let us part, Beauvais," said I, at length, as I held my hand towards him. "Let us say adieu to each other, and for ever. I can forgive all you have said to me far better than I could myself, had I listened to your persuasions. What may be honourable and just in you, would be black ingratitude and dark treachery in me. I shall now endeavour to forget we have ever met, and once more — good-bye!"

"You are right," replied he, after a pause of some

seconds, and in a tone of great sadness. "We never should have met. — Adieu!"

"One word more, Beauvais — I find that I have been suspected of some treasonable intercourse, that even here I am watched and spied upon; tell me, I beseech you, before you go, from what quarter comes this danger, that I may guard against it."

"In good truth, you give me credit for quicker perceptions than I have any right to. How so loyal a gentleman should lie under such an imputation, I cannot even guess."

"Your sneers shall not provoke me. The fact is as I state it; and if you will not help me to the discovery, tell me, at least, who are the persons to whom you introduced me formerly at Beauvilliers?"

"Very excellent company! I trust none of them has cheated you at *écarté*."

"Pray, have done with jesting, and answer me. — Who is your abbé?"

"*Ma foi!* He is the Abbé D'Ervan. What part of France he comes from — who are his family, friends, and resources, are all questions I have never thought proper to ask him, possibly because I am not so scrupulous on the score of my acquaintances as you are. He is a very clever, amusing, witty person — knows almost every one — has the *entrée* into every house in the Faubourg St. Germain — can compose a couplet, and sing it — make a *mayonnaise* or a *madrigal* better than any man I know — and, in fact, if he were one of these days to be a minister of France, I should not be so very much surprised as you appear this moment at my not knowing more about him. As to the other, the Russian secretary, or spy, if you like the phrase

better, he was unlucky enough to have one of his couriers robbed by a party of brigands, which, scandal says, were sent out for the purpose by Monsieur de Talleyrand. His secret despatches were opened and read: and as they were found to implicate the Russian government in certain intrigues carrying on, the czar had only one course open, which was to recall the sec. and disavow his whole proceedings — the better to evince his displeasure. — I hear they have slit his nose, and sent him to pass the winter at Tobolsk. Lastly, the préfet — what shall I say of him, save that he was a préfet in the south, and wants to be one again. His greatest endeavours in any cause will be to pledge its success in Burgundy, or, if you wish, drink the downfall of its enemy; and as to his enthusiasm, he cares a devilish deal more for a change of weather than a change of dynasty, particularly in the truffle season, or when the vines are ripening. Such are the truly dangerous associates you have kept company with. It now only remains to speak of my humble self, whose history, I need scarcely say, is far more at your service than worth the hearing. Are you satisfied?"

"Quite so, as regards me; by no means so, however, as to your fate. Short as our intimacy has been, I have seen enough of you to know that qualities like yours should not be wasted in a mad or hopeless enterprise."

"Who told you it was either?" interrupted he, impetuously. "Who dares to say, that the rule of a usurper is more firmly placed than the prestige of a monarchy, that goes back to Hugues Capet? Come! come! I will not discuss these questions with you,

nor have I temper now left to do so. Give me the countersign to pass the sentry, and let us part."

"Not in anger, though, Beauvais."

"Not in friendship, Sir," replied he, proudly, as he waved back, with his, my proffered hand. "Adieu!" said he, in a softened tone, as he moved from the room, and then turning quickly round, he added — "We may meet again hereafter, and scarcely can do so on equal terms. If fortune stand by you — I must be a beggar: should I win — yours is indeed a sorry lot. When that time comes, let him with whom the world goes best, not forget the other. — Good-bye!" And with that he turned away, and left the house.

I watched him as he strode along the silent alleys, careless and free as though he had no cause for fear, till he disappeared in the dark wood, and then I sat down at the door to think over our interview. Never had my heart felt more depressed. My own weakness in having ever admitted the intimacy of men whose dangerous designs were apparent, had totally undermined the strong principle of rectitude I should have relied upon in such a trial, and on which I could have thrown myself for support. What had I to guide me after all, save my devotion to the cause of Buonaparte himself. The prejudices of education — the leanings of family opinion — the inclinations of friends — exist not for the alien. He has to choose his allegiance — it is not born with him; his loyalty is not the growth of a hundred different sympathies, that have twined round his heart in childhood, and grown with him to manhood, speaking of home and infancy — of his own native streams and mountains — of a land that was his father's. No! with him it is not a conviction —

it is but a feeling. Such was the substance of my reverie; and as I arose, and strolled out into the park, it was with a deeply-uttered vow to be true to him and his fortunes, whose name first lit the spark of ambition in my heart, and through weal or woe to devote myself to him.

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